

THE
CHRISTIANITY
OF
CHRIST
AND
HIS APOSTLES

JNO. J. TIGERT



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The Christianity of Christ
and His apostles

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HISTORICAL STUDIES OF FUNDAMENTAL
NEW TESTAMENT PROBLEMS

BY

JNO. J. TIGERT, D.D., LL.D.

EDITOR OF THE METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW

*"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall
make you free."*—JESUS CHRIST

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TO
MARY, HOLLAND, AND JOHN

PREFACE

THE prevailing negative and destructive tendencies and results of much current theological criticism have begotten not ill-grounded fears among the conservative, and some grave misgivings as to their actual position among those liberals who are not wholly given over to believe a lie. Meanwhile, ordinary mortals must have a shelter in the time of the storm. To throw up such a shelter is the object of the following constructive studies. They are not polemical. They aim to be historical. They are the sober reflections of one who abides in essential orthodoxy after a wide range of reading that has tended, more or less, to shake the foundations. The author trusts that he has an open mind for truth. He believes with the Apostle that whatsoever doth make manifest is light. The summing up of the theological situation which he was compelled to make for his own mental and religious peace, he is hope-

ful may perform a like office for those who are similarly afflicted. He has endeavored to preserve breadth of sympathy with Christian scholars of many types; but to that breadth he could not sacrifice the breath of life which comes from Christ alone. In these pages, he endeavors to give, with sincerity and calmness, his reasons for continuing to believe that one is his Master, even Christ, and that all others are but brethren. It is hoped that the standpoint of generous and sympathetic, and yet convinced and unfearing, orthodoxy from which these pages are written will not prove offensive to those who are of another mind, and who have supplied so much excellent literature of a contrary tendency which has provoked, as he hopes, a wholesome reaction in the mind of the author. If this little book shall bring repose to inquiring and disquieted spirits, the prayer and purpose of its writer will have been answered.

JNO. J. TIGERT.

SPRING HILL, 1 *July*, 1905.

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I

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

ON the surface at least it wears a surprising look that, at the beginning of the twentieth Christian century, men should still be inquiring, What is Christianity? That millions of humble men and women in many generations should have had living experience of its reality and worth does not diminish this surprise at the present attitude of the scholars and savants. The inquiry might seem the more reasonable, or the less surprising, if it proceeded only from the scholars of alien civilizations, such as that of Japan in the Far East; which are but now beginning to be penetrated by the spirit and institutions of Christendom, if not of Christianity. But the question is started at the centers of Christian learning and by the leaders of theological thought. At

Berlin Professor Harnack, perhaps the foremost Christian historical scholar of our times, whose dating of the early Christian documents¹ and history of the later Christian dogmas² are alike in their scientific exhaustiveness, has published the brilliant and reverent treatise³ that has been turned into English under the title, "What is Christianity?"; while here in America, at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, Professor Adams Brown has paralleled Herr Harnack's title and work in a volume⁴ profoundly and widely learned, if not so charming and sensitively religious. Even our Roman Catholic friends have not remained undisturbed among the swift-rushing currents of the day, and at Paris Alfred Loisy's work⁵ divides public attention with the

¹ "Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur."

² "Dogmengeschichte."

³ "Das Wesen des Christentums."

⁴ "The Essence of Christianity."

⁵ "The Gospel and the Church": largely a reply to Harnack, but containing independent views that Roman theologians must attend to.

new Gallicanism which Premier Combes has precipitated upon Pius X.

Thus alike in Catholic and in Protestant theology, at Berlin, Paris, and New York, the learned representatives of three of the foremost peoples of the modern world, and of widely different schools of doctrine, have consented together at least in this, that they think it necessary, at the present stadium of man's knowledge, to set forth afresh, according to the light that is in them, the essential nature of the Christian religion.

These are not superficial men. The posts they occupy, as well as the works they have produced, certify that they are penetrated with a vivid sense of the deepest tendencies and needs of the time. Upon the threadbare theme of the modern progress in physical science and mechanical invention I need not dwell; though the very mass and intricacy of the facts condition the intellectual outlook and fix the far horizons of the scientific mind. So far as fluid

physical theory has begun to solidify in the dogmatic materialism of a Haeckel,⁶ or the crudities of a Goldwin Smith,⁷ it is perhaps enough to allow it to break and fall of its own weight. Scientific, philosophical, and theological scholars seem fairly agreed in this judgment on materialism. A deeper conditioning of the intellect of modern man, and therefore of the Christian as of all other standpoints, has issued from the fresh, full fountains of idealistic philosophy. Readers of Ritschl⁸ and Kaftan⁹ and Hermann¹⁰ and Harnack¹¹; of Fairbairn¹² and the Cairds,¹³ and an almost countless host of English, Scottish, and Amer-

⁶ "The Riddle of the World."

⁷ "Guesses at the Riddle of Existence."

⁸ "Justification and Reconciliation."

⁹ "The Truth of the Christian Religion."

¹⁰ "The Christian's Communion with God."

¹¹ Works mentioned above.

¹² "Philosophy of the Christian Religion"; "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology."

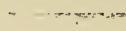
¹³ "The Evolution of Religion"; Discourses.

ican theologians, know that Leibnitz and Kant and Hegel and Lotze, whatever corrections of their conclusions may be necessary, have not lived in vain. Lastly, Christian philological and historical scholarship, directed alike to the Old Testament and the New, but especially to the former, and drawing within its widespread net the ancient civilizations and religions of Babylon and Assyria,¹⁴ has taken us to the ultimate sources of Semitic religion, so far as they are historically explicable. Surely, then, these are grounds enough for the dissipation of the surprise we were at first disposed to feel at the attitude and inquiries of Harnack and Brown and Loisy, even if taken to be typical of the theological situation in Germany and America

¹⁴ Sayce, in numerous works; Hilprecht, "Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century"; McCurdy, "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments"; Rogers, "History of Babylonia and Assyria"; Hommel, "The Ancient Hebrew Tradition"; Delitzsch, "Babel und Bibel," and the numerous replies to the latter.

and France. We may, perhaps, without presumption join them in a fresh search for the innermost essence of the Christian religion,—a conception of it that shall draw the purest and best minds of our day, bewildered by the clamor of many voices on every side, to become learners in the school of Christ.

I do not deem it necessary or expedient to enter into any general examination of the works of the authors to whom reference is made above,—though their books are brief, and the three may be read in a few days,—or even to indicate in detail the grounds on which their conclusions have proved unsatisfactory. Suffice it to say that the books have been interestedly and sympathetically read; that the reading of them is, in part, the genesis,—at least the immediate genesis,—of the present essay; and that those who may be curious to measure the angle of my divergence from such scholars, at whose feet I should gladly sit in many things, may gather their materials by a



comparison of the processes here pursued on a small scale, and the results here reached, with those which have proved unsatisfying. Having had, I may humbly claim, some experience of the power of the religion of Christ from my very youth, and having been drawn through many years by personal inclination, as well as by editorial duty and my vow as a presbyter in the Church of God, to a fairly close and broad study of the literature of the issues involved,¹⁵ I trust I may, without immodesty, also attempt to answer the question, What is Christianity? and to declare those things which are most surely believed in the Christian community.

I shall begin with a definition: with the explanation and defense of the several elements of this definition, or historical and spiritual

¹⁵Somewhat elaborate reviews of nearly all the books mentioned in the preceding footnotes will be found from my hand in the pages of *The Methodist Quarterly Review* for the last ten years.

conception, of the Christian religion, the rest of this chapter will be occupied.

Christianity is the religion of God's redeeming love, manifested in the Incarnate life, the Atoning death, and the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Kingdom of God, whose citizens are become sons of God by the power of his Spirit, and brothers of all mankind.

First of all, Christianity is religion. It is not theology; though there is, of course, a Christian theology, since man must reflect on his religion as he does on all things else he experiences. This theology, so far as vital, is a product of the religion, and a hedge round about it; it is not the root from which the religion springs, nor the trellis upon which this vine of God's planting grows. At its best, theology is a correct human science of divine things. The divine things are permanent—nay eternal, and hence unchangeable. With a true instinct for the permanence of religion,

our Roman Catholic friends have mistakenly transferred its unchangeability to its dogmas—the formulas of historical origin and development which undertake to measure and to illumine, or simply to protect (perhaps for only a given age), its realities. Dogmas, like all other scientific formulas with a human history, can maintain their place in sound thinking and assured conviction only by maintaining at the same time a consistent place in the sum total of known realities; or, at least, their harmony with man's whole verifiable conception of the world. Through nineteen centuries Christianity has maintained its vital touch with human life and interests through a body of progressing and enlarging dogma, ever changing through the external apologetic interest which shapes it, and yet never surrendering the changeless realities of religion which it incloses. The core of dogma is divine. Whether, at the beginning of this twentieth century, the vastly greater and more complex volume of

man's knowledge is to bring at last a fatal and final breach with that divine order of the world for which Christianity stands, is the very question which makes the modern crisis. That the Christian religion has so far fairly met the new conditions is hardly doubtful; that it will continue to meet them, it is the effort of apologetic theologians to show: in any case, it is certain that the modern mind is forever done with an acknowledged dualism in knowledge and experience. The dogma must live its life in the intellect that is informed with all other knowledge.

To Christianity belongs, not only the unchangeableness of religion, but also the unchangeableness of history. This religion has been mediated to humanity by *facts*. Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection appeal to us as facts. If we find Cardinal Newman¹⁶ placing the superiority of Romanism to Protestantism

¹⁶In his "Apologia Pro Vita Sua" and elsewhere.

in its *objectivity* (and so Loisy), it is because too often a pseudo-Protestantism, in its abuse of the right of private judgment, has seemed to suspend realities, both of the religious and of the historical order,—the facts of man's religious nature, as well as the objective, historical facts of Christianity,—upon the fancies and vagaries of personal opinion and individualistic self-assertion and conceit; as if these facts could be annihilated by disbelief of them, or in any degree altered by our personal attitude toward them. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."¹⁷ The foundation facts of Christianity have a very different objectivity from that of blinking Madonnas, utterly meaningless and useless even in the system of those who credit them; and from that of the priestly hocus-pocus of the altar,

¹⁷John xii. 48.

which by the distinction of substance and attributes made by a false realism is withdrawn from the inspection of the senses: for these Christian facts are established, either by the psychology of religious experience, old as the world and broad as humanity, on the one hand, or on the basis of the veracity of the human senses and the trustworthiness of the ordinary canons of historical testimony, on the other. So established, they are immovable and unchangeable foundations, possessed of an objectivity which man cannot alter; though, according to the fixed laws of human probation,—probation in both the intellectual and the moral sense,—they have to make themselves good afresh, like all other knowledge, in the consciousness of each new generation.

Nor is Christianity philosophy, though capable, since truth is one, of philosophical statement and defense. Nor yet is it ethics, or an art of right living. It includes this. It cannot be divorced from righteousness. But deeper

than ethics, as back of theology and philosophy, is religion. And what is Religion?

Religion is the communion of God with the human spirit issuing in a life whose center is this communion; or, in older phrase, the life of God in the soul and life of man. And the Christian religion is no other than communion with God, mediated by Christ and his Spirit.

If this communion is a delusion, there is no religion; and with the denial of the reality of religion goes Christianity, and every other accepted historical manifestation of the presence and energy of God in human life and history. This communion includes, of course, two elements; and but two. On the divine side, communion is self-manifestation; on the human side, it may be summed up in one comprehensive and most real experience, prayer, which, in its widest sense, includes worship and conformity of the will, life, and nature of the worshiper to the revealed character and demand of the worshipful God.

Without tarrying to mark finer distinctions, I may notice that the experience of normal men with great uniformity develops the knowledge of self, of the world, and of God. These are of tremendous persistence and great universality. The permanent disturbance of normal apprehension in either of the three spheres, or the commingling of the spheres themselves, may be accepted as a mark of insanity. Only the fool says in his heart, There is no God. The experiences of self and the world, as well as the self-revelation of God, carry the mind in its earliest life through to the knowledge of God, which is rarely abandoned, but grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength. The conviction, like certain vital functions in the body, lies deeper than our volition or consciousness—and for the same reason. When, especially in the master spirits of the race, the consciousness and dominance of self and the world are reduced to the vanishing point, the consciousness and power of God

are in possession of the field. By every token, the Founder of Christianity, alone among men, perfectly suppressed self and the world, and lived a life of unbroken communion with God and of undisturbed love and loyalty to him. For most men, self and the world are nearer and more noisy; but God, if deeper and apparently more silent amid the clamor of the voices of the flesh and of the world, is more persistent; speaks often and powerfully out of the silences when the other voices are hushed, or out of the bitter experiences that reveal the nothingness of self and the world; and he is certainly the only satisfying portion of man's inmost nature. Fellowship with God was the ancient keynote of Hebrew religion that in many Psalms,¹⁸ for example, contains the

¹⁸ Psalms xvi., xlix., lxxiii., cxxxix.: cf. Kennedy's "St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things." "Immortality is the corollary of religion. If there be religion, *i. e.*, if God be, there is immortality, not of the soul, but of the whole personal being of man. Ps. xvi. 9."—A. B. Davidson, *Job*, p. 296.

promise of immortality and heralds the victory over death and the grave proclaimed by Christ and Paul. In truth the so-called consciousness of God is only God revealing himself in the consciousness. The reality of communion with God, and of his self-revelation, is everywhere assumed in the New Testament. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,"¹⁹ said Jesus to Peter after his great confession in Cesarea Philippi. Though Jesus himself had been for long the daily associate and intimate teacher of his disciple, the central truth of Christianity, upon which as possessed by persons Jesus purposed to build his Church, had come as an inward divine revelation and conviction to Peter: into the heart of the Rock Apostle the Divine Father whispered the secret of his Son's nature and person.

This self-revelation of God is no peculiar

¹⁹ Matt. xvi. 17.

privilege of apostle or prophet: rather apostles and prophets, being heirs of the heritage in an eminent degree and the earliest recipients of the experience, have made the initial and normative record in the New Testament which the experience of later Christians reproduces ever new and powerful in heart and life.²⁰ "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."²¹ That spiritual discernment of the deep things of God can come only by divine self-manifestation is clear, "For what man knoweth the things of a man save

²⁰ "The Bible itself is an expression of experience. If this experience had not continued, the Bible would have become only the record of an ancient and forgotten life, powerless to preserve Christianity in the world."—Dr. W. N. Clarke, "Outline of Christian Theology," p. 18.

²¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”²² Hence the spiritual man judges all these things, while he himself is rightly not amenable to the judgment of those who know them not. John Locke tells us the story of the man blind from birth to whom “red” seemed like the sound of a trumpet. Destitute of the sense of sight he must express himself in the language of hearing: so foreign is the language of heaven to the strangers of earth. Even the Christ of history is one with the Christ of experience, the latter carrying us in our personal consciousness to the Divine Person and redemptive power of the former, since no man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. Every Sunday the Christian presbyter dismisses the congregation of Christ’s people with a challenge to the present reality of a living experience springing from

²²1 Cor. ii. 11.

the Persons of the Trinity themselves: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."²³ Is it true, or is it not? If it is true, Father, Son, and Comforter, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, reside in every Christian breast; the high and lofty inhabitant of eternity, according to the older Hebrew conception, dwells with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit.

Thus it is evident that our ordinary doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is too narrow. The Spirit witnesses not only to personal acceptance and the forgiveness of sins and the adoption of sons, but also to the fundamental realities of the Christian religion,—the love of the Father, the mediation of the Son, his own indwelling and illumination,—which are bound up with forgiveness as one whole. It is in this point of view that it becomes evident in what

²³2 Cor. xiii. 14.

sense the "forgiveness of sins" is the heart of Christianity as a personal experience and may be taken, as it sometimes is, as the whole of the gospel.

Unitarianism appears a simplification of Christianity and an elimination of Trinitarian mysteries. As such, it should contribute mightily to the universal extension of the gospel. But history belies this expectation. It is agreed by the freest and most rationalistic historians of dogma and of the Church that the triumph of Arianism in the fourth century would have been the extinction of Christianity; Socinianism exhibited no fructifying power; and modern Unitarianism is a corpse of theological thought so dead that it savors of disrespect to kick it. "Everything on which Athanasius staked his life," says Harnack, "is described in the one sentence, *God himself has entered into humanity.*" Have we not here the secret of the universal failure of the Unitarian conception of Christianity? If God did not

draw nigh to man in Jesus Christ, the *raison d'être* of Christianity is canceled, and the Christian spirit rejects the Unitarian scheme as vanity and lies. It is an interpretation of the gospel which annihilates it. So then we conclude that Christianity is religion,—the religion of the communion of man with God, the God who is Father, Son, and Spirit.

The second virtue of this definition is that it traces the Christian religion to its ultimate source in the love of God. Any conception of religion or any interpretation of the gospel that is untrue to the original, essential, unchangeable love of God will be cast out as false by the Christian conscience. That "God is love" is the deepest truth of the divine self-manifestation in his Son, in that Son's apostles, and in the hearts of all their followers. This love is the only hope of sinners and the only shelter of humanity. It is of the eternal nature of God, unproduced, underived: lest we should overlook it, twice within the limits of a brief

epistle the Apostle John tells us that "God is love."²⁴ That the holiness of God involves also the necessary condemnation of sin may have led some to preach as if the text read, "God gave his only-begotten Son that he might love the world"; but there is no sentiment in the New Testament even distantly akin to this. The atonement is born of the divine love; not the divine love of the atonement. The newborn babe lying upon its mother's breast is the most helpless and dependent of earth's creatures. If the mother love could be transformed into malignity, the babe's future would be hopeless: indeed, instant destruction would be inevitable; it must perish. Likewise, if God could become the enemy of man and array himself against his child, there could be no deliverance for the helpless and sinful race.

But this love is recognized as *redeeming* love. It brings deliverance through the death

²⁴I John iv. 8, 16.

of Christ from the retributive wrath of a holy God and the merited penalty of sin.²⁵ Christ himself is redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*).²⁶ This love of God, therefore, is directed not to angels, but to men; not to sinless, but to sinful, beings. It is active, outgoing, seeking, transitive. It removes obstacles. It comes in the person of Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost. It pays a price for its own satisfaction. It is based on the infinite preciousness of its object to the heart of God, apart from moral desert. The human soul, even in sin, is a treasure whose possession God himself desires and is willing to purchase at a great price. "A doctrine of atonement," well says Dr. James Denney, "is a doctrine of the cost of forgiveness to God." A cheap forgiveness is a kind of moral horror, for it can only mean that sin, so terrible to man, is nothing to God. This undeserved, seeking, saving love directed to the unworthy

²⁵ Rom. iii. 24; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.

²⁶ I Cor. i. 30.

and the outcast is the deepest lesson of the parable of the Lost Son²⁷—that crown of all our Lord's parabolic sayings. Whatever may be involved in the transition from a probationary to a punitive state, from the temporal to the eternal world of fixed results, there is no reason to question that the gospel represents this love as following the vilest into the depths and to the lowermost limit of possible recovery.

The primary redemptive movement of the divine love manifests itself in the Incarnation. Here lies the heart of the question in our day about the nature of Christianity. The dignity, the beauty, the purity, the intellectual originality and force, the spiritual insight and genius, even the moral uniqueness and sinlessness, of Jesus are freely, nay gladly, recognized. All that realm, the Galilean has conquered. On this plane there seems the opportunity of reconciliation of the religion of Christendom with

²⁷Luke xv. 11-32.

the science of Christendom, preparatory to the universalizing of Christianity. If the reality of the Incarnation be surrendered, for theology itself, as well as general knowledge and common intelligence, there seems to be great relief: all the puzzles of the dual nature of the Incarnate Person, all the mysteries of the Trinitarian existence of the Godhead, are eliminated at one stroke; and Jesus, as the fairest flower of humanity, diffuses his fragrance throughout the world. It is a tempting suggestion. If Christ and Christianity can be reduced within the limits of the human, amalgamation with all else that is human,—science, ethics, social reform, political advance,—immediately follows. Moreover in many minds,—let it be frankly acknowledged,—the suggestion is not born of the spirit of compromise, but of dire necessity. The modern mind is really for Christianity—without miracle and without dogma;²⁸ but so-

²⁸ Such is the contention of Mr. Matthew Arnold in his "Literature and Dogma." How attenuated Chris-

phisticated by the conception of the universality and uniformity of law, by the reign of causality, and by the brilliant generalization that most men have agreed to style evolution, without raising further hard questions, it revolts fundamentally and almost instinctively at the notion of Incarnation—the living of the life of God within the limits of the life of even the wisest, purest, and most Godlike man. It is, therefore, not so much a proposal of compromise and surrender, a price to be paid for the allegiance of aliens, as it is a condition and demand created by the modern spirit, without which it seems to find itself unable to enter upon the path of religion. As such, we may sympathize with it.

tianity becomes in the hands of this apostle of culture I need not stay to point out: in the hands of others (positivists, pantheists, agnostics, secularists) the thin thread of “the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness” breaks in twain, and both ends,—the “Power not ourselves” and the “righteousness” for ourselves,—are flung away.

But let us reflect. Christianity without the Incarnation ceases to be religion. It surrenders its distinction. Jesus, however unique in the ethical realm, is no more a bond and mediator between God and man than Socrates, with whom he has been so often compared. Harnack more than intimates that the discourse of Jesus, as set forth in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, was exclusively of the Father and never of himself. But this is a mistake: and the Ritschlians generally have been obliged to assign to Jesus the "value" of God. Here Loisy joins the issue most effectively with Harnack, and I very cordially side with the Catholic against the Lutheran. Whatever may or may not have been the apocalyptic elements that entered into Jesus' total conception of the Kingdom of God, in the Sermon on the Mount itself his own lordship in the Kingdom is directly coupled with the rewards of obedience to the Father's will: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into

the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will *I* profess unto them, *I* never knew you: *depart from me*, ye that work iniquity.”²⁹ And the great and decisive passage in Matthew and Luke is an indisputable and integral element of the synoptical tradition: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.”³⁰ Upon this knowledge and power Jesus bases his direct invitation to the world to come (not to the Father but) to himself: “Come unto *me* all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn*

²⁹ Matt. vii. 21-23.

³⁰ Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.

of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."³¹

This conclusion is not merely theoretical. As has been intimated, it has the widest confirmation of history, and, it may be added, of Christian experience. Every form and species of Unitarianism is felt to deprive Christianity of its worth and, as religion, is doomed. Christ has a divine place in his religion or (essentially) he has none. Unitarianism may be comprehensible; it may be acceptable to the scientific spirit; as a simplification it may seem the better adapted to diffusion; we may even forgive the tortuous exegesis of professional theologians like Wendt,³² George Holley Gilbert,³³ and others who, in this interest, would exclude the preëxistence from the sayings of Jesus re-

³¹ Matt. xi. 28-30.

³² "Teaching of Jesus," II. 168-178.

³³ In his "Revelation of Jesus."

corded in the Gospel of John, or, what amounts to the same thing, reduce it to a purely ideal significance; but, when the last concession is made, the witness of the New Testament, of the Christian consciousness, and of history is uniform that without a Divine Christ his religion is powerless and dead. It might survive as ethics or as a programme of social progress; but the satisfaction of the scientific demand, thus conceived, is the denial of the religious need; and Christianity is asked to survive by a sacrifice that involves its death.

That the redeeming love should come to man by way of the Cross is to-day, as from the beginning, another stone of stumbling. Theologically, it is thought to be inconsistent with the basal fact of the divine love on which I have insisted as the ultimate source of the Christian religion; ethically, it is thought to involve a contradiction of our primary intuitions. Historically, it is sometimes hinted that the doctrine of Atonement is not older than An-

selm,³⁴ and owes much of its Protestant currency to Grotius;³⁵ or that, so far as Pauline, it is only a juridical reflection of Roman law in the Christian firmament.

Once more I may appeal to the New Testament, to Christian consciousness, and to history that a connection between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins is primitive and constant in the Christian religion. It is directly traceable to the lips of Jesus in the two great sayings of the Synoptical Gospels: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν),"³⁶ and "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto

³⁴ "Cur Deus Homo?" finished at Capua in 1098.

³⁵ "Defense of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ Against Socinus," published in 1617.

³⁶ Mark x. 45; Matt. xx. 28: "to liberate many from the misery and penalty of their sins," Thayer, *sub voce*.

remission of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν).”³⁷ When we descend to the apostolic circles we find the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, John, and Paul all committed to the use of the great words, ἱλάσkesthai, ἱλασμός, ἱλαστήριον: “Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people (εἰς τὸ ἱλάσkesthai τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ)”;³⁸ “And he is the propitiation for our sins (ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν); and not for ours only, but also for the whole world (περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου)”;³⁹ “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμόν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν)”;⁴⁰ “Whom God set forth to be a propitiation,

³⁷ Matt. xxvi. 28.

³⁸ Heb. ii. 17. ³⁹ I John ii. 2. ⁴⁰ I John iv. 10.

through faith, by his blood (ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι), to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God.”⁴¹ Thus on the widest induction of the several classes of the apostolic literature of the New Testament, we find a threefold witness to the reality of atonement by propitiatory sacrifice in the death of Christ.

That the demand for atonement is consistent with the love of God is manifest when we regard the holy element in that love; and that the divine love provides the atonement is expressly declared. “Herein is love,” to quote once more a pivotal passage, “not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the

⁴¹ Rom. iii. 25: See Sanday’s full discussion of this passage, “It is impossible to get rid, from this passage, of the double idea (1) of a sacrifice, (2) of a sacrifice which is propitiatory.”—Com. on Romans, in *International Critical Commentary*.

propitiation for our sins." And Paul declares, "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."⁴² It is clear that there was no antecedent indisposition in this divine love to forgive, else it could not have freely provided the necessary means to forgiveness. It is clear that the divine holiness interposed an obstacle to forgiveness, else the propitiatory sacrifice had been unnecessary.⁴³ The atonement is thus at once the propitiation for sins and the measureless revelation of the forgiving love of God.

More than twenty years ago I printed an ex-

⁴² Rom. v. 8.

⁴³ "The obstacle to forgiveness," says Dr. Stevens, "lies not in God's feelings, but in his essential righteousness, which so conditions his grace that without its satisfaction he cannot in self-consistency forgive. In the heathen view expiation renders the gods willing to forgive; in the biblical view expiation enables God, consistently with his holiness, actually to do what he never was unwilling to do."

position of the doctrine of atonement⁴⁴ which enters into details and combats objections. I have no disposition so much as to look into that earlier piece of work just now; though I abide by its conclusions and the grounds of them. It is enough to say, in this connection, that, as of the essence of Christianity, the atonement presents two aspects—toward God and for man. Toward God it is *propitiatory*; for man it is *vicarious*. Jesus in his death is man's substitute before God and the author of salvation by the remission of sins. The Scriptures have nothing to say, indeed, of commercial equivalence in penalty, an unconditional exchange of so much for so much which is utterly foreign to the moral realm, nor of that other impossible human theory of ethical transfer of character. But rob the atonement of its propitiatory and vicarious character, and you degrade it to the level merely of a moral

⁴⁴ "Methodist Doctrine of Atonement," in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (New York) for April, 1884.

spectacle,—which, indeed, it is, sublimely appealing and moving,—or of a governmental expedient,—which subordinately and consequentially it may be; but neither the moral spectacle nor the governmental expedient answers to the full and deep representation of the New Testament concerning the ground and demand and provision of atonement in God himself; nor is any view that omits the propitiatory and vicarious elements able to make the guilty conscience clean.⁴⁵

The Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

That the earliest theme of apostolic preaching, by Peter⁴⁶ no less than by Paul,⁴⁷ was Jesus

⁴⁵ Perhaps the best of our recent treatises on the subject is Dr. James Denney's "The Death of Christ." Dr. Bernhard Weiss in his just now (1905) published "Religion of the New Testament" has some exceedingly valuable expositions of the pertinent scriptures.

⁴⁶ Acts ii 24-36; iii. 15, 21; iv. 2.

⁴⁷ Acts xiii. 30-37; xvii. 18: "because he preached Jesus and the resurrection."

and the resurrection does not admit of doubt. The resurrection was the tremendous event that reestablished the faith of the apostles and disciples, and clearly became the most vivid and the overshadowing and dominant fact in the consciousness of the Apostolic Church. It was a physical resurrection. The empty grave alone might not establish this fact; but the documents are uniform in placing the stress on the evidence of the senses and indisputable tests of bodily existence and sensible experience—such as eating and drinking, and the correction or corroboration of sight by touch. “Him God raised up the third day,” is Peter’s summary in the Acts of the experiences of the disciples with their Risen Lord, “and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.”⁴⁸ In the earliest summary of the

⁴⁸Acts x. 40, 41.

evidence by Paul, "he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep; after that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles; and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."⁴⁹ The details of the gospel narratives amply confirm these Petrine and Pauline summaries. "Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. . . . Jesus then cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise. . . . So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter,"⁵⁰ etc. "And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them."⁵¹ "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."⁵² "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy

⁴⁹1 Cor. xv. 5-8. ⁵⁰John xxi. 12-15.

⁵¹Luke xxiv. 42, 43. ⁵²Luke xxiv. 39.

finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”⁵³ And yet Jesus’ own commendation is upon a mightier demonstration than that of sense, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”⁵⁴

To this history must be added prophecy—on the lips of Jesus himself. These prophecies were of the obscurer as well as the plainer kind, and on that account possess with many critical minds the greater weight. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”⁵⁵ is a sentence that (historical criticism warrants us in saying) undoubtedly fell from the lips of

⁵³John xx. 27. ⁵⁴John xx. 29.

⁵⁵John ii. 19; cf. Matt. xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58; xv. 29, 30. John records the saying in the course of his history, but makes no mention of its use at the trial of Jesus; while Mark and Matthew have no record of Jesus’ use of the saying, but both mention its production as proof of blasphemy at the ecclesiastical trial of our Lord.

Jesus. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,"⁵⁶ is an equally indisputable saying in which a definitely limited but otherwise wholly indefinite interment, with no mention of either death or resurrection, is dwelt upon.

St. Paul long since set forth the consequences of the denial of the resurrection of Jesus. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the

⁵⁶Matt. xii. 40.

dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and, if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.”⁵⁷ These consequences follow as certainly to-day as when the apostle wrote. The resurrection gave life to Christianity; it sustains the life of the Church now; without it the religion of Jesus must perish.

Historically, as we have seen, the resurrection of Jesus is sufficiently attested. Even Keim, with all his indisposition to transcend the limits of historical and natural science as he conceives them, is obliged to conclude that, though “history can take cognizance only of the faith of the disciples that the Master was risen, and of the marvelous effect of this faith in the

⁵⁷I Cor. xv. 12-20.

establishment of Christianity"; yet "in order to account for this faith of the disciples and its effect in conquering and renovating the world, we must suppose, contrary to the natural order to which science is confined, that God did not let what he had ordained end in death, or hand over the resurrection of Jesus to the uncertain play of subjective visions."⁵⁸ With his extra-natural and extra-scientific explanations we need not concern ourselves; the facts are much more naturally accounted for by the physical resurrection. The tendencies to its denial even among some theologians of our day are the result of the pressure of the modern spirit. But, if in Jesus God became incarnate, the resurrection and ascension become his natural, if not necessary, exit from the earthly sphere, and this pressure is misdirected. The resurrection is the direct continuation of the line which marks the character and activities of Jesus.

⁵⁸"Jesus of Nazareth," VI. 360-362.

As an historical religion, therefore, Christianity includes this fact in its foundations. It is as the living and glorified Head of his Church that Jesus perpetuates his work. By one Spirit, proceeding from the Father and from the Son, are we all baptized into one Body. Sever the Head from the Body and the Body dies. The Church lives through her living Head, "who ever lives to make intercession for us."

For a moment, I may review the course along which we have come. Christianity is religion,—communion with God mediated by Jesus Christ and sustained by his Spirit; it has its source in the freely bestowed and freely bestowing love of God; which, in turn, is a redeeming activity exerted toward sinners, manifested in and measured by the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. So far the Gospel centers in the Person of Jesus, and what he was and did is more than what he taught beyond this sphere, all his ethics having their spring here both for him

and for his disciples to the end of time. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."⁵⁹ It is a divinely laid foundation in the birth, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to which no human master builder can add, and from which he cannot take away. It is a real and objective foundation, unchangeable with the unchangeableness of God, beyond the reach of Churches, councils, and theologians. The essentials of the Christian religion are embodied in its Founder. The attempt to remove any of them is to dismember Him.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ I Cor. iii. 11.

⁶⁰ On the great passage in I Cor. iii. 11, Meyer correctly and decisively remarks: "*The foundation already lying there*, however, is not that which *Paul* had laid (as most interpreters, resting on verse 10; including de Wette, Neander, Maier, Hofmann); for his affirmation is *universal*, and if *no one* can lay another foundation than that which lies already there, Paul, of course, could not do so either, and therefore the *κείμενος* must have been in its place before the apostle himself laid

We may now pass to Jesus' life work as a Teacher and the Founder of the Kingdom of God.

In a sense, we are now turning from the historical and the spiritual to present, practical, and concrete Christianity. We turn to the teaching of Jesus concerning the law of love as

his foundation. Hence the *κείμενος θεμέλιος* is that laid by God (so, rightly, Rückert and Olshausen), namely, *Jesus Christ himself*, the *fundamentum essentiale*, he whom God sent, delivered up to death, raised again, and exalted, thereby making him to be for us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. . . . This is the *objective foundation*, which *lies there* for the whole of Christendom. But this foundation is *laid* (v. 10) by the founder of a Church [as Paul], inasmuch as he makes Christ to be appropriated by believers, to be the contents of their conscious faith, and thereby establishes them in the character of a Christian Church."—*H. A. W. Meyer*, Commentary on First Corinthians *in loco*. Cf. Beet: "Christ is the foundation of the Church, objectively; inasmuch as upon his death and resurrection rest his people's faith and hope. He is so subjectively by his presence in them.

the law of life,—a teaching which is the direct consequence of the revelation of the love and Fatherhood of God. It is not necessary to establish here by a critical inquiry the exact nature of the Kingdom of God.⁶¹ The literature of the subject is voluminous and instructive, and is still increasing. Jesus clearly regarded himself both as the Founder of the Kingdom and as King within it. The Old Testament dispensation is preparatory, and even John the Baptist is external to the Kingdom.⁶² The Kingdom is, in general, the reign of God through his Son in holy love over the hearts and lives of men who accept the law of

The rock on which we stand is both beneath our feet and within our hearts. This foundation, laid objectively for the whole Church on the Great Facts, was laid subjectively in the hearts of the Christians at Corinth, as the firm ground of their personal hopes, by Paul.”—Commentary on First Corinthians.

⁶¹See Bruce; and Orr, in Hastings's "Dictionary of the Bible."

⁶²Matt. xi. 11.

supreme love to him and of universal love to their kind. "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," is the final conception and deposit in the Christian consciousness as reflected in the Pauline Epistles. The Church, though falling far short of the ideal, may, for our present purpose, be accepted as its organized and visible form. It is one: its marks are the congregation of faithful men, the preaching of the pure word of God, and the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. All the Churches,—if we accept the superficial plural,—contribute to the Kingdom and belong to it; and yet it is more than the sum of all the Churches. The redeeming activities which, humanly speaking, emanate from the Kingdom fall upon all men as potential sons of God and citizens of his realm. The divine administration as directed toward wicked and rebellious children,—who are still children in the divine regard,—is for their

reclamation and salvation. Jesus laid down the golden rule and the law of love as the necessary legislation of the Kingdom; and St. John adds to his declaration of the divine love ("Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins") the deduced injunction, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."⁶³ More briefly: "We love, because he first loved us."⁶⁴ The motive of the love we ought to bear one another is not found in the worthiness of the object, even as this is not the source and spring of the divine love; but in the undeserved goodness of God in the gift of his Son for us and for all men, notwithstanding their and our unworthiness. Once more the vital place and practical value of the Incarnation in Christianity become apparent. Moreover, the Fatherhood of God is the original truth, from

⁶³I John iv. 10, 11. ⁶⁴I John iv. 19, *R. V.*

which is derived the brotherhood of man; a brotherhood established through the relation of the children to a common Father. And what is the world, both within and without the Church, more in need of to-day than the reduction of the law of love to practice and the everyday and matter-of-course recognition of the brotherhood of men? Let us notice some applications of the law of the Kingdom.

There is the urgent problem of capital and labor. Are not the basal laws of political economy confessedly the expression and outgrowth and, when consciously followed, the organization of the principle of self-interest, which, on the merely human plane, is regarded as legitimately and necessarily controlling? Under the law of supply and demand, does not the capitalist go into the open market to buy labor as he goes to buy material? Does he not seek to purchase flesh and blood on the same terms and according to the same conditions on which he

purchases lumber or bricks or stone? I am not asking, Is he cruel in his feelings or purposes? In the view of economics, simply, Is not the price of labor regulated as a matter of course by the law of supply and demand? Is the number of the children in the workman's family, or only the number of other workmen clamorous to do the given work for the same or lower wages, the decisive element in estimating compensation for labor? On the other hand, Does the workmen's union consider the human suffering entailed by the prolonged and general strike, or only its effect on the advancement of wages? I need not tarry to give formal answers to such a list of questions. It is clear that if the antagonisms of capital and labor are ever to be permanently reconciled, it must be through the bringing in of a higher law than that which rules the commercial world. The economic world cannot be divorced from the Christian. In a word, the reconciliation must come because both capitalist and laborer are

made members of the Kingdom of God and observe the law of the brotherhood. Nothing else can regulate human greed, on the one hand, or human envy and withholding of that which is meet, on the other. The Kingdom of God is not sociological in the ordinary sense; but it brings in the law and the better hope of another society of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and this law becomes effective as the individual capitalist or laborer becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is not of this world because its law transcends and transforms the laws of human society; but it is of this world by the very function and fact of this transformation. Economics and sociology, pure and simple, need a supplement which is supplied by the law of love in the Kingdom of God. If it be objected that such a supplement is commercially chimerical and impossible,—after the manner of the usual coarse and blind criticisms on the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount,—the answer is at hand. If the law of

love is not thus capable of practical and general introduction into the affairs of men, then Jesus was a mistaken enthusiast in his announcement of this supreme and universal demand, and the Kingdom of God is a city in cloudland. But, to my mind, the correct reading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives every man the most practical measure of his Christianity, and the most legible warrant of his citizenship in the Kingdom, in the degree of the operation of the law of love in his life.⁶⁵

A favorite specific prescribed by the social reformers is the shortening of the hours of labor. Shorten them by all means. If seven or eight hours of manual labor a day will sustain the laborer's family at its present stage of comfort at least, society or commerce ought not to exact ten. But some reformers seem to have been sadly disappointed that the emancipated laborer does not always devote his two

⁶⁵See Dr. C. A. Briggs's "The Ethical Teaching of Jesus."

or three hours of leisure to the reading of good books in the "library" which he is supposed to have made haste to accumulate, or to his general moral and religious improvement. Though the notions of such men as Bishop Potter concerning the necessary functions of the saloon as the "poor man's club" fall but little short of outright diabolism, it is nevertheless true that thousands of workmen with their shortened time will employ their newly acquired leisure over their beer-mug and pipe rather than over books and religious newspapers.

Let these shortened hours stand as representative of all else that it is proposed to give the laborer—better wages, better houses, better food. Let it be granted at once that these improved conditions will give many a man a chance for his life—his intellectual and spiritual life as well as his physical. Let it be granted that Christians owe it to their Lord and to themselves, as well as to the underpaid laborer and the "submerged tenth," to afford

these better conditions. There is no question, indeed, of the duty of the Church and of society. But, to save unthinking sociological enthusiasm from sore disappointment, it may be asked, In the light of experience and our knowledge of human nature, what results are to be reasonably expected from these changes? Are the social reformers preaching a sane, sober, true, whole gospel when they lead us to anticipate the general redemption of society through the adoption of these measures?

All of these changes may be summed up in the ambitious language of the books on sociology as "transformation of environment." By a transformed environment it is thought that society may be regenerated *en masse*. I fear not. On Fifth Avenue the increased income and leisure lead often only to the substitution of the bottle of champagne for the bottle of beer; of the grand ballroom of the very rich for the low dance-hall of the very poor; of gilded and elegant lust, which reaches its end if need

be through the divorce court, for the foul debauchery of the dive and the slum. The gospel of regeneration through a new environment,—unless the new environment is wide enough to include the Kingdom of God and all its saving forces,—is evidently a defective and misleading,—I do not say false,—gospel. A transformed environment is often needed for both the very rich and the very poor to prepare the way for the Gospel of Christ. Jesus probably thought it more necessary for the former than for the latter. But, in either case, he who thinks that a change of environment secures a change of heart is vastly mistaken. At the extremes of society we have two environments which, with the exception that the men and women who move in them are human beings, have scarcely an element in common. Yet it might be a very nice question which of these extremes stands most in need of the redemption provided in Christ. The lusts of human nature are common to both wings, and differ only in the de-

cency and scale of their gratification. As intimated above, Jesus doubtless thought the case of the rich sinner more desperate than that of the poor. Let the Christian sociologist go before as the John the Baptist of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ. Particularly, let both wings of society be reached by enlisting the very rich in the service of the very poor. Let us not be discouraged if numbers of the very rich refuse to be enlisted, and if numbers of the very poor refuse to be helped. No problem is more delicate and difficult than that of helping the helpless, whether rich or poor. It is visionary to believe that we shall ever be able to bring the whole face of society to a common level, economical and financial, or moral and religious. Meantime, the gospel of love and service is of supreme obligation, and must dictate the life and control the energies and resources of all who profess and call themselves Christians. We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, even to the extent of bearing the

infirmities of him who is weak by his own fault and sin. But transformation of environment will not solve the whole problem: our gospel must include not only the transformation of the environment, but the transformation, the reorganization, the regeneration of the human beings who move in the midst of it.

Here in America, and more especially in the South, the race problem is always with us. Are we expecting the legislators at the state capitals, or the congressmen at Washington, to solve it? Is not the political world, like that of economics, confessedly ruled by the law of human self-interest and advancement? Is there any hope for the solution of such a problem by political machinery, except as the agents who control the machinery and the populations that are controlled are members of the Kingdom of God? And what is this but declaring once more that the reduction of the law of love to practice is the Christian and only solution of the race problem? Granted that the negro is

often ignorant, brutal, savage.⁶⁶ Granted that his too frequent record of unmentionable crime is horrible and revolting. If all were a thousand-fold worse than it is, the law of the brotherhood of the Kingdom is all the more manifestly the only sufficient remedy. For the duty to discharge all the offices of love, let us recall, does not rest on the worthiness of the object, but on the free, undeserved love of God in Christ Jesus alike to us and to the negro. If St. Paul were writing to-day, he might ask, "Is God the God of white men only? Is he not also of the negroes?" and he would answer, "Yes, of the negroes also." And in that answer would be wrapped up the Christian dynamic of love that should dissipate racial hatreds and variances and solve racial problems of whatsoever nature.

⁶⁶Though we are prone to overlook his astounding progress—as an owner of realty and a payer of taxes, as a farmer, merchant, manufacturer, and professional man; progress, educationally, morally, religiously.

The Church is committed by her Lord to the work of foreign missions—to the limit of world-wide evangelization. And much of the professed disbelief in foreign missions is hollow and selfish and avaricious, even when the disbelievers essay to justify themselves by the needs of the home field. Nevertheless, If we love not the negro whom we have seen, how shall we love the Chinaman whom we have not seen? Is not the negro the wounded, bleeding, half-dead Jew lying helpless and naked in the road that leads from every Southern door, to whom he among us who would acquire the neighborly character of the Good Samaritan must minister? Can any assiduous devotion to the distant needy one absolve us from the duty of ministration, according to the ability which God giveth, to this desperately needy one who is just at hand?

But I must draw toward a conclusion. Rome has annexed to her conciliar definitions the *anathema sit*: let him be anathema—that un-

fortunate one who believes not the foregoing ecclesiastically defined dogma. The Pauline and Protestant anathema is, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be anathema,"⁶⁷ or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema: Maranatha."⁶⁸ Jesus himself said, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."⁶⁹ It is the divinely fixed and unchangeable elements of the living Gospel, preachable and preached for the salvation of the world, as they center in the historical Jesus, the Incarnate, Atoning, and Risen Saviour, altogether lovely and lovable, which, if man reject, he, by his irresponsiveness to the last manifestation of love, advertises his worthlessness and irredeemableness and his fitness for the refuse heap of God. It is Christianity

⁶⁷Gal. i. 9. ⁶⁸1 Cor. xvi. 22.

⁶⁹Matt. xxi. 44; Luke xx. 18.

as religion that saves; without it the soul dies. That the Gospel, notwithstanding the outstanding characteristics of modern mind and life that we have been considering, is in this new century renewing its youth and giving promise of universal and permanent conquest, as of the Absolute Religion, few open-eyed observers will deny. Christians,—the one Church and family of God in the earth,—are recognizing the law of love as binding them all together and as binding the Body of Christ to the world of mankind; Christian missions are covering the earth as the waters cover the sea; Christian philanthropy is the noblest and most conspicuous mark of our times. That the twentieth century will witness developments of the Christian religion with which only those of the first will be comparable, one ventures little in prophesying. Christ is King to-day in a sense and with a breadth of which flaming apocalyptists scarcely dared to dream; and perhaps the new century shall

Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

And now the task I set out to do in this initial study is done. In meager outline I have sought to exhibit the essential characteristics of the Christian religion. Its Origin has been sought in the love of God; its Means in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, through his Incarnation, his Atonement, and his Resurrection; its End in the founding of the Kingdom of God and the binding of men to God and one another by the law of love. "Thy kingdom come" must be the prayer and labor of the Church, for it is the hope of the world lying in the wicked one. All the selfishness and antagonisms of men are to be lost in the Kingdom which ruleth over all.

I may close with a repetition of the definition which alone seems to me to do justice to all the elements of the Christian religion, none of which may be omitted without fatal injury:

Christianity is the religion of God's redeem-

ing love, manifested in the Incarnate life, the Atoning death, and the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Kingdom of God, whose citizens are become sons of God by the power of his Spirit, and brothers of all mankind.

II

THE VOCATION OF JESUS THE PROOF OF HIS GODHEAD

THE VOCATION OF JESUS THE PROOF OF HIS GODHEAD¹

“MY meat,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”²

¹I am conscious that this chapter could not have been written without the perusal of Albrecht Ritschl's “Justification and Reconciliation.” I have had before me a page of notes made just after the book was read about four years ago. But I am unable to make detailed references without again reading a large volume, into which I have not had leisure so much as to glance. I shall hope that, as reflecting my own convictions stated in my own way, the essay is not the worse for that. While there are elements of the Ritschlian theology that are to be decisively rejected, I am confident that the judgment of those who regard Ritschl as the greatest and most influential German theologian since Schleiermacher is correct. He is destined, I think, to an increasing influence in America, and, discriminatingly used, is capable, with Kaftan, of rendering the largest service to evangelical orthodoxy.—J. J. T.

²John iv. 34.

Though occurring in the Fourth Gospel, this is a saying of the Lord's that bears the mint-mark of his coinage as indisputably as the most luminous of the self-attesting sayings of the Synoptical Gospels. It passes current without question or suspicion even among the hostile critics of the Gospel in which it occurs, as having the exact and full value of the mind of Christ. It was evidently stereotyped from his lips; for the record in which it appears is evidence sufficient that, so far were those who heard it from being equal to its invention, that they were quite incapable of understanding it after it was spoken into their ears. Its inimitable originality betrays its source and stamps its parentage to the end of time. Whether we look upon it as a telescopic or as a microscopic text,—as bringing nigh the great which is very far off, or as making large and discernible the delicate and obscure that is just at hand,—it is the deepest disclosure of the fountains of our Lord's life.

We have all seen in the Roman churches the pictures of the "bleeding heart" of Jesus. Garments and flesh are torn aside, and the quivering heart, from which the blood drops are falling, is exposed impaled upon the spear point. Not this hideous daub of the meaner sanctuaries, nor the masterpiece of the great cathedrals, affords the true insight into the interior depths of Christ's life. Rather he himself deliberately puts the veil aside and invites the adoring gaze of his disciples when he says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." From the psychological point of view, these words open up our Lord's life to its innermost core. The setting, with all the wealth of delicate and natural detail that marked the interview with the woman of Samaria, is evidently historical. The errand of those who went away into the city to buy meat and who, on their return, obtusely asked, "Hath any man brought him aught to eat?" is the last circumstance that makes inevitable

the saying itself and our belief of it as a word from the mouth of Jesus. Its force and compass entitle it to be used as the key to unlock the sacred secret of the person and life of Jesus.

What does it mean?

I. *It cannot mean less than this, that the consciously and deliberately chosen, and steadily pursued, personal end and purpose of Jesus served him for satisfaction and sustenance.* To do the will of him that sent him proved to be his soul's meat, the solid satisfaction of his soul's need, the one food that answered the ultimate demands of his nature.

1. How did this doing of the will of another meet the deepest needs of Jesus' own soul? In a threefold way.

(1) It was a response, of course, to the demands of his own nature; it was the development of his own gift. Even skeptical investigators like Wernle recognize in Jesus what they are pleased to denominate a super-

human consciousness. That there were very extraordinary elements in that consciousness the most casual reader of the Gospels must recognize. The scientific method demands that we begin by taking full and exact account of these elements. It is outraged when the claims of Jesus are set aside without taking account of his mind and his work. From this unique consciousness of Jesus, accordingly, we may take our point of departure.

Jesus was true to God because he was true to himself, and did not, while obeying a will consciously other than his own and divine, substitute for his own conscious nature, gift, and call something alien to them. What Jesus was and did was primarily *of himself* and *as himself*; otherwise the development and course of his life become unreality and mockery. There are forms of statement of the Anselmic doctrine of atonement which lend countenance to the view that Jesus could stand in the place of another only because he had

no post of his own to occupy. There is a point of view in which that is, no doubt, profoundly true. But, for my present purpose, it must also be made evident that the peculiarity of Jesus' consciousness was that it appointed for him a path so unique that he alone could walk in it. Duty, in general, is of the higher to the lower: of the Maker and Master to the creature and servant. What the latter can render is only a meed of service in recognition of a debt of gratitude already incurred. But original and absolute duty is of the Superior to the inferior, apart from the character and conduct of the latter. Now Jesus found his consciousness possessed of this peculiar quality of absolute duty, penetrating his soul to its depths, and dominating from first to last the activities of his life. The peculiarity of this self-consciousness of Jesus, as we may gather from almost every page of the Gospels, was that while it was native, personal, original, and gathered the true law of

its active expression from within, it was at the same time identical with the will of God, objectively imposed and recognized as such.

(2) Thus, though in the fullest sense springing from the deepest wells of his selfhood, it was not selfish, for this unique personal end and purpose found its satisfaction,—still personal, if one insist upon it,—in an absolute and unvarying devotion to the welfare of others. “He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall save it,” was an axiom of the ethical and religious life born of Jesus’ crystalline knowledge of his own soul and the laws of its healthful and sinless activity. This rule of life-saving which Jesus lays down so unwaveringly for the observance of his disciples was tested to the uttermost in his own experience. In this the Master was not better than his disciples; it was enough for Jesus that he be as his disciples. Initial victories were won in the temptations of the wilderness; the final, at Gethsemane and Cal-

vary; but the law was formulated in the experience of Christ long before these final crises. If at the last, when the price of loyalty to the law of his selfhood, which was at the same time devotion to his kind and, as will be noted explicitly, unqualified submission to God, was the sacrifice of his life, there was a momentary faltering in the Garden or on the Cross, that faltering was but momentary, and the selfhood of Jesus followed the law of its absolute development in a final sacrifice of self for the highest good of the race of which he was a member.

(3) The native law of his selfhood not only demanded complete devotion to the good of his kind but found itself identical with the execution of the plan and purpose of God. This was the third moment in the satisfying sustenance of him whose meat was eminently "to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work." That "man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth

of God,"³ Jesus had adopted as the law of his life at the very beginning of his ministry; "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done"⁴ was the word of acceptance of the Father's will in the Garden; and "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me"⁵ was the final verdict of his consciousness as he went forth to betrayal and crucifixion.

(1) The law of his own self-development; (2) the law of absolute devotion to the welfare of humanity; and (3) the law of complete abandonment and committal to the will of God: these three were completely one law in the inmost nature of Jesus dictating and controlling his purpose and plan.

2. It is hardly necessary to point out that this triple-stranded single law of Jesus' nature applies equally to Doing and Suffering as parts

³Matt. iv. 4; Luke iv. 4; Deut. viii. 3.

⁴Luke xxii. 42; Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44; Mark xiv. 36.

⁵John xiv. 30.

of his One Obedience. Indeed, suffering as accepted and ethically satisfying and helpful is itself, in a sense, *active*. As dumb submission to the inevitable it has no moral value, and is sometimes illustrated even in the case of the lower animals. Mental suffering as mere weakness, tending toward and degenerating into disease, is ethically indifferent. It may be simple breaking down and surrender in the presence of the tasks that are refused and set aside because of their assumed incommensurability with our resources and strength. Then it becomes morally culpable. None of these characteristics attached to the suffering of Jesus. It was an active entrance into the sorrows of the world and a positive acceptance of the burdens of humanity. It was the deliberate assumption of the office of universal Sin-bearer. No man took his life from him. He laid it down of himself. If it be not profanation to liken the highest human suffering to that of him who trod the winepress alone,—in

a majestic solitude of suffering to which there is no human approach or parallel,—then Washington, as he marked the bloody footprints of his men in the snows of Valley Forge and yet held them to the work of the Revolution; then General Lee, as he moved among the retreating regiments from Gettysburg, saying, “Boys, it was all my fault,” and assuming a blame that did not belong to him; then sad-eyed and sad-hearted President Lincoln, as he wrote words of immortal consolation to that Massachusetts mother who had given five sons to die for their country; then these, and such as these, may know some measure of the active exercise of that vicarious suffering which in the Supreme Person of history wrought the redemption of the world. Vicarious suffering, so far from being the blot, is the glory of the moral realm. Its superlative exercise in Jesus is a true mark of his deity. It is the outermost rim of his life, encircling and binding together its manifold activities, as these are offered

unto God upon the altar of humanity, redeemed and sanctified by his blood.

3. The outward crown and completion of the law of Christ's life is found in *prayer*, which was for him *meat* since it was the feeding of his soul on the will of God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has correctly seized the secret. Jesus, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, "*was heard.*"⁶ His Father heard and answered with an unmistakable revelation of his will, with which that of his Son came into immediate accord. Prayer was for Jesus the active outgoing of his soul in its highest and best, and always finally victorious, moods to discover the will of God, to penetrate and, as it were, to analyze it to the last limit, that he might arouse and reënforce and feed his own

⁶Heb. v. 7.

will by the realized and vivid perception of its identity with the Father's. To this end, he hesitated not, if need be, to spend the whole night in prayer, as before the choosing of the Twelve, upon whose ministry hung the final establishment of the Kingdom of God. So far is this exercise of prayer from being, as alleged by Wernle and others, the proof of our Lord's pure and dependent humanity,—though, on one side, it has its lessons here, too,—that it becomes the exalted and active union with God which attests the divine heights on which our Lord dwelt above the plane of mere manhood and affords the best illustration of the purity and depth of that unique consciousness which was in him. In this he is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and continues to this day the exercise of his incommunicable mediatorial office. Here lie the characteristics which constitute him the Representative and the Redeemer of men.

In all the foregoing we may see the equip-

ment of the One Intercessor; thus are we led to

II. *The Isolation and Uniqueness of Christ's Vocation.*

In a twofold sense the isolation and uniqueness of Christ's vocation now become apparent: (1) he did not share it with any other messenger of God however exalted, as Moses or Elijah; (2) it was a vocation for him supreme and solitary, so that he was incapable of dividing it with any other calling, coördinated with it or subordinated to it. Coördination is in itself impossible; subordination, intolerable.

I. The preceding discussion has shown the exalted and unsharable uniqueness of the mind of Christ in its consciousness of union with God and of the identity of its native ends with the plans and purposes of God. So far as we can penetrate from the side of human psychology, as we endeavor to gather up in a formula of psychical law the phenomena of the consciousness of Jesus manifested in the events

and sayings recorded in the Gospels, this peculiar experience of union with God, and of identity of purpose with him, is of the essence of the personality of the God-man in whom the divine and human natures were joined together in an indissoluble copartnership. There were two wills, but between them complete harmony reigned,—nay, absolute identity subsisted; this harmony and identity freely proceeding from the human side in its essential and native impulses and ends, and from the divine side in the imposition and penetration of the law of an absolute purpose and plan of God that encountered no obstacle or hindrance in the perfect will of Jesus.

2. But the uniqueness of Christ's vocation appears also in the exclusion of all other ends.

Ordinary men, and even men of genius, may have their (1) domestic, (2) social or civil, (3) professional, and (4) artistic or scientific, vocation. These may be but ever enlarging

spheres for the broadest realization of the all but infinite riches with which even our finite human personality is dowered. And when all are entered into, the conscious possibilities of the person remain unexhausted.

(1) It is the ordinary duty of men to assume the responsibilities of family life. He who refuses the obligations of husband and father generally condemns his own nature to a stunted and one-sided development. God hath set the solitary in the family, and only in the blessed companionships of that circle is the perfection of normal character ordinarily possible. This is the law ordained of God.

(2) Similarly, one must enter into all the duties of citizenship and assume the several relations, and consequent obligations, that arise out of the complex organization of modern society. None can be evaded without guilt. One's best judgment and influence, according to the measure of his ability and of that station in life wherein it has pleased God

to call him to this service, must be given to the conduct of the affairs of government, local and economical, and general and political. The Christian, in particular, according to the precepts of the gospel, must always be the duty-doing and exemplary citizen, rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Only when the exactions of Cæsar carry with them the impossibility of rendering to God the things that are God's does the law of exemption from the lower, through loyalty and devotion to the higher, come into play.

(3) Commonly there must be added personal devotion to a specific professional or commercial or manufacturing or agricultural calling. No man, with a sound mind in a sound body, can guiltlessly be an idler in the vineyard of this busy world. He who will not work must not eat. He has no right to impose his maintenance as a tax upon the energies and resources of his fellows.

(4) Beyond all these spheres of domestic,

social, and business life may lie devotion to science and art (though, in special instances, exclusive devotion to these by the professional artist or scientist may move this sphere of activity up into coincidence with the third). Both the artistic and the scientific interest and activity answer to legitimate developments of human faculty; they lie nearest to the generality and disinterestedness of religion itself, and often afford a field for all noble human endeavor short of the noblest. They are not to be excluded from the life plan of the normal man who seeks to make the most of himself, and by making the most of himself to be worth most to his kind.

But when we examine the record of Christ's activities, we find that he deliberately excluded and refused all these spheres of development and usefulness,—a plan of life that could be excused and explained only by the superiority and dominant exclusiveness of his unique purpose and end.

(1) Christ accepted no domestic vocation. He speedily detached himself from the family into which he was born without founding a family of his own. The whole Romish conception of the influence of the Virgin with her Son, and of her controlling position as the "queen of heaven," is belied by the express representations of the Gospels, and by the unique consciousness of Jesus which united him with God rather than with his human mother.

(2) Our Lord peremptorily refused a civil vocation, as reformer, economist, or judge. He was neither a socialist nor a labor leader, as some of the recent superficial interpreters of the gospel would lead us to esteem the carpenter of Nazareth, as he is assumed to have been. Such narrowing of his aim was incompatible with the depth and universality of his consciously pursued personal purpose and end. As a meliorist, every specific alleviation of the ills of humanity was included in the ultimate

results of his work; but the universal and eternal significance of that work could not be sacrificed to the temporary rôle of a social or political emancipator in Palestine or the Roman Empire. Jesus, though he announced the principles that carried in them the doom and extinction of human slavery throughout the earth, had not one word to say about the evils of the slavery that honeycombed the Roman Empire in his day. He would not be the divider of estates between quarreling and covetous litigants, though announcing every day the laws of the universal brotherhood which he came to establish. As statesman, or warrior, or social emancipator and reorganizer, for his own people or a wider commonwealth, he doubtless might have accomplished much. It does not require much delving beneath the surface of the Gospels to discover that a real temptation for Jesus lay in this direction. But, had he yielded, he could not have been the Saviour of the world. Sinking himself into

the common categories, he would have sacrificed the unique and divine ends of his mission.

(3) He did not engage himself in systematic fashion with the sacred learning of the Jews—like Paul. It is now the fashion to assign to Paul (as Wernle does) the credit of the universalization of Christianity. I would not seek to detract from his merit. He was possibly the greatest man that ever lived; but no one knew better than he that his Master was more than man. He had problems of infinitely perplexing detail to solve; he had the most inveterate prejudices of human nature to overcome, first in himself and afterwards in his collaborators or their professed disciples; but there is not an epistle of Paul's that does not show that this scholar was utterly incapable of *founding* Christianity. He was capable of *understanding* and *propagating* it, indeed, as few of his own time or since have understood and preached it. But *founding* it is quite a different thing. It is not overly difficult to

construct from data furnished by Paul himself the picture of what his life would have been without Christ. A Pharisaic legalist of unusual sincerity and strictness, a doctor of the law, a greater Gamaliel serving his people with fidelity and zeal,—these are the rough outlines whose details one need not stay to fill in.

(4) Christ was no apostle of art or of science. Great and beneficent as is such an apostleship, its noblest exemplars would confess the inferiority of themselves and their work to the Christ and his mission. Yet there are not lacking those who rise up to lament the absence of æsthetic and scientific elements from the gospel that Christ preached, and to condemn the provincial barbarism that excluded such high aims from the sphere of his activities. As if the sense of the beautiful, of which he who saw more loveliness in the lily of the field than in the royal array of Solomon was certainly not devoid, could deflect

this sensitive soul filled with sympathy for human suffering and sin from his task as Redeemer of men! As if the perfecting of knowledge were comparable with the great deliverance which he came to work out and proclaim! As if there were not a heavy indictment lying against the mere æstheticism and culture of the day because of its indifference to the moral ideal and its insensibility to the needs of suffering men!

Thus I may reach, in explicit and final statement,

III. *The Unique Vocation of Jesus the Proof of his Godhead.*

1. It was, first of all, such a proof, or inward demonstration and conviction, for himself. His unique consciousness and gift fixed the plane and type of his temptations. No inward experiences of Jesus were more real, or entered more intimately into the depths of his consciousness, than these conflicts, whose actual occurrence is the only warrant or ex-

planation of their incorporation in the narratives of the Gospels. When we read, "he was tempted in all points like as we are," it is impossible to conceive that Jesus, perfect physical man though he was, had any real temptation in the direction of sensuality. Whatever merely theoretical possibilities must be allowed, to guard his absolute freedom and his perfect manhood, the trials that assailed him arose from a totally different quarter. As a human being, his temptations lay in determining the career that was demanded by the unique elements of his consciousness. And here, it may be added, the struggle of his human faculties did not arise from a lack of harmony with the Father's will, consciously apprehended and dissented from, but from the necessity that the man, who passed through all the stages from an infantile to a mature consciousness, should discover and penetrate the Father's will, and should fix himself upon the certainties of his own course, prescribed and determined alike by the divine

revelation and by the uniqueness of his own personal gift and call. It was necessary that Jesus should come into possession of himself; and by so much as the elements of his personality were complex and unparalleled was the decision as to his actual course difficult. Here, as I conceive, lay the secret of the fasting and temptation in the wilderness, of the nights of lonely, wrestling prayer in the desert or on the mountain, of the prayers and struggle in the Garden. He discovered unique elements in his consciousness from the moment of his maturity—say, from the time of the visit to the temple at the age of twelve; but the interpretation of these inward deliverances, and the decisions as to the exact conduct demanded by them at the several crises of his life, constitute the well-defined field of the probation of Jesus of Nazareth. The most universal of the three temptations in the wilderness, and, according to St. Matthew, the last of the three, was the vision of “all the king-

doms of the world and the glory of them”;⁷ from which Jesus turned aside to begin the epoch-making and world-shaking proclamation, “the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”⁸

Thus,

2. As Founder of the Rule or Kingdom of God, Christ’s purpose and plan were from the beginning superhuman, transcending the sphere of all earthly dominion and mere kingly conquest. As deliberately undertaking the founding of the Kingdom of God among men, Christ’s personal end and purpose were identical with God’s, not only in quality, but in scope and extent. No other servant of the Almighty had ever dared to proclaim his mission to be to carry the work of God through completely to a perfect accomplishment,—*τελειώσω* is the verb employed in John iv. 34. This testimony of Jesus in his initial preaching becomes indeed the deepest spirit of the

⁷Matt. iv. 8. ⁸Matt. iv. 17.

prophecy: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace: of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever."⁹

The new Kingdom was spiritual,—an empire, first of all, over the hearts and lives of individual men,—universal, and unending. It could not be measured by any political power or glory, however unparalleled. The Papacy at its best estate, under its Gregories and Innocents and Bonifaces, could not contain it; the combined ecclesiasticisms of to-day cannot mark its boundaries. Historically, Christendom, expanding from the band of Jerusalem disciples that chose the successor to Judas to the Church Universal and the Christian insti-

⁹Isa. ix. 6, 7.

tutions of the league of Christian States to-day, is the partial and still incomplete exposition and vindication of the Christ's choice and purpose. If prophecies and gospel records alike raised questions of some obscure Jewish writings alone, then the flippant Renan and the rationalistic Strauss and the agnostic Spencer, and their like, might be entitled to their say. But in so far as History, as the sphere of the free, is superior to Science, as the sphere of the fixed; in so far as reason and conscience, ethics and religion, as Huxley himself began to suspect, afford the distinctive theater of that which is properly and exclusively human, and consequently the high point of humanity's contact with the divine and of God's revelation of himself to man,—just so far does it become evident that the nineteen Christian centuries, which illustrate the vocation and achievements of Jesus of Nazareth, attest the unity and identity of his plan and purpose with those of God himself. And it doth not yet appear what

Christendom,—the reign of Christ so far as visible,—shall become, extensively and intensively, in the earth. Beyond the earthly limits, human thought falters and fails when the effort is made to conceive what the Kingdom shall be when Christ shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, and “shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.” Such conceptions of St. Paul’s concerning the ultimate destination of the Kingdom (apart from all theories of inspiration) are certainly entitled to outweigh the modern speculations, about which there is not space or need to dispute here, and to determine the true interpretation of the apocalyptic elements, which, on the surface, the teaching of Jesus exhibits.

3. Even in the Synoptical Gospels, and in the oldest and most authentic elements of them, *Christ is represented as the Bearer of God’s Revelation and Sovereignty*. Here the classical passages are Matt. xi. 25-30 and Luke

x. 21-24. Of the pivotal verse, Matt. xi. 27, Luke x. 22, Dr. Sanday says:

“This passage is one of the best authenticated in the Synoptic Gospels. It is found in [nearly] exact parallelism both in St. Matthew and St. Luke; and is therefore known to have been part of that ‘collection of discourses’ (cf. Holtzmann, *Synopt. Evangelien*, p. 184; Ewald, *Evangelien*, pp. 20, 225; Weizsäcker, pp. 166-169) in all probability the composition of the Apostle St. Matthew, which many critics believe to be the oldest of all the evangelical documents. And yet once grant the authenticity of this passage, and there is nothing in the Johannean Christology that it does not cover. Even the doctrine of preëxistence seems to be implicitly contained in it.”¹⁰

In short, its genuineness is indisputable. It is like “an aerolite from the Johannean heav-

¹⁰The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel,” p. 109.

en," says Hase; and "for that reason," adds Plummer, who cites these words of Hase's, "causes perplexity to those who deny the solidarity between the Johannean heaven and the Synoptic earth."¹¹ Keim calls it "the pearl of the sayings of Jesus."

In Matthew, the passage, properly arranged as a single paragraph in the Revised Versions, both the English and the American Standard, reads:

"At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and

¹¹Commentary on Luke, p. 282; Hase, "Geschichte Jesu," p. 527.

he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹²

In Luke, the complete paragraph reads:

“In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. And turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see

¹²Matt. xi. 25-30.

the things that ye see: for I say unto you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.”¹³

In Luke the passage has a most natural and vivid historical setting in immediate connection with the return of the Seventy, though in both Matthew and Luke it is associated with the denunciation of the three cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. “The Seventy returned with joy,” and the Master said, “In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven,”¹⁴ *i. e.*, “that ye are destined by God,” says Meyer, “to be in the future participators in the eternal Messianic life.” In that very hour Jesus also exulted (*ἡγαλλιάσατο*). His own divine exaltation of joy is closely and expressly connected with the return and rejoicing

¹³Luke x. 21-24, both Revisions.

¹⁴Luke x. 17-20.

of the Seventy. According to the reading of the Sinaitic and Vatican fourth century manuscripts and of other uncials, which have determined the text translated in our Revised Versions, this rejoicing was "in the Holy Spirit." That is, the ecstatic and exultant state of Jesus was recognized as the consequence of an immediate indwelling and inspiration by the Spirit of God. In the success of the mission of the Seventy, Jesus had "beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." In this hour of assured triumph of the Kingdom, and of the competence of the human agents through whom the prince and power of darkness must be overthrown, Jesus and the Seventy enjoyed a baptism of mighty joy, which, in the case of Jesus, at least, was directly due to his possession of the Spirit of God. Nothing distantly resembling this is recorded of Jesus anywhere else in the Gospels. It might almost be considered the crisis of his Spiritual Transfiguration, of which his Bodily Transfiguration was

the adumbration and symbol. In that moment of supreme exultation, Jesus burst forth, "I make public acknowledgment of thy glory, I give thee praise (ἐξομολογοῦμαι), O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." It is in his character as Universal Sovereign that the Father is here addressed by his Son. "All things," Jesus declares, "have been delivered unto me of my Father": not simply the *potestas revelandi*, though the connection suggests this as a primary reference. He announces himself as the Bearer of the perfect revelation of God and of the Divine Sovereignty in all things pertaining to the establishment and welfare of the Kingdom.¹⁵

¹⁵"It is quite as unwarrantable to limit πάντα in any way whatever, as it is to take παρεδόθη as referring to the *revelation of the doctrine* (Grotius, Kuinoel, and others), or to the *representation of the highest spiritual truths* (Keim), which Christ is supposed to have been appointed to communicate to mankind. It is not even to be restricted to all human souls (Gess). What Jesus indicates and has in view is the full power with

Moreover, he speaks out of the richness and fullness of a superhuman and divine consciousness whose contents he is well aware are beyond all natural human ken, and open only to the eye of God: "no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father: and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." The passage asserts a complete mutual knowledge, from which all others are excluded, of the nature, thought, counsel, action, purpose, and end of the Father by the Son, and of the Son by the Father.¹⁶

which, in sending him forth, the Father is understood to have invested the Son, a power to dispose of everything so as to promote the object for which he came. Jesus speaks thus in the consciousness of the universal authority (xxviii. 18; Heb. ii. 8) conferred upon him, from which nothing is excluded (John xiii. 3, xvi. 15); for he means to say, that between him and the Father there exists such a relation that no one knows the Son, and so on."—*Meyer, Commentary on Matthew*, American ed., p. 231.

¹⁶Where Luke has *γινώσκει τις ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός*, Matthew has *ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱόν*. Matthew's compound verb an-

In Luke, this profound fact and truth and its consequences, visible even in the time of our Lord and his apostles, are represented as the secret hidden from the prophets and kings of the old dispensation; in Matthew the universal invitation of the Gospel is directly based on the completeness of this mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son and the identity of their nature, purposes, and ends: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

4. Thus as the Founder of the Kingdom of God and the sole Bearer of the perfect Revelation of the Father and of that Father's Sovereignty, Jesus is the one Ambassador of heaven, the Son and heir as distinguished from all

swers to Luke's *τίς*. "Both," remarks Plummer, Commentary *in loco*, "might be translations of the same Aramaic."

other servants, in whom God makes manifest and effective in a wholly adequate, unique, and original way his own eternal end and purpose of love toward all mankind. The fabric of the whole mediatorial activity of Jesus, in life and death, in resurrection and ascension, in his session at the right hand of the Majesty on high, in all that he was, taught, and did, constitutes the medium and material of God's perfect revelation of himself. Consequently Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"¹⁷ and "I and my Father are one."¹⁸ Hence, in a word, his Godhead affords the sole possible ground and explanation of his vocation and work as the Revealer of God and the Founder of the eternal divine Kingdom; and "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."¹⁹

¹⁷John xiv. 9; xii. 45. ¹⁸John x. 30. ¹⁹John v. 23.

III

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WHEN one reads the first chapter of First Thessalonians, he is probably perusing the first page of the New Testament that was committed to writing. There may be materials in the Synoptical Gospels that assumed written form at an earlier date, but no one of our Gospels in its present shape is as old as this first letter from the pen of the Apostle Paul. Written, say, within twenty years of the close of our Lord's ministry and earthly life, First Thessalonians associates Jesus with God. The Church of the Thessalonians is "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ The first sentence after the salutation mentions the Persons of the Trinity, if I may here by anticipation use the language of later ecclesiastical

¹I Thess. i. 1.

dogma, on this wise, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."² The apostle describes the Thessalonian Christians as "imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."³ In the final verses of this short chapter, the elements of the gospel,—the word of the Lord that sounded out in Macedonia and Achaia and through the Roman Empire,—are epitomized. The Thessalonians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus,

²1 Thess. i. 2-5. ³1 Thess. i. 6.

who delivers us from the wrath to come.”⁴ If we analyze these passages never so briefly and superficially, we find that God is so easily and naturally spoken of as “the Father” and “our Father,” that the teaching of Jesus concerning the Fatherhood of God is historically presupposed, prior in time to the writing of this Thessalonian letter, though later reduced to writing in the Gospels we have. The Fatherhood was of the essence of St. Paul’s preaching, though he was not one of the Twelve, and was a commonplace of the gospel received among the Thessalonians. The mission of the Holy Ghost, and the power, joy, and assurance which he brings to all Christians, are appealed to, also, as a common experience and possession of the Church, and Jesus is already “the Lord Jesus Christ,” in whom, with the Father, the Church exists. On the final passage cited (verses 9, 10) Harnack makes a more impressive comment than any I can give:

⁴1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

“Here we have the mission preaching to pagans in a nutshell. The ‘living and true God’ is the first and final thing; the second is Jesus, the Son of God, the judge, who secures us against the wrath to come, and is therefore ‘Jesus, the Lord.’ To the living God, who is now made known, we owe faith and devoted service; to God’s Son as *Lord*, our due is faith and hope.

“The contents of this brief message,—objective and subjective, positive and negative,—are inexhaustible. Yet the message itself is thoroughly compact and complete. It is objective and positive as the message of the only God, who is spiritual, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Lord and Father of men, and the great disposer of human history; furthermore, it is the message which tells of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came from heaven, made known the Father, died for sins, rose, sent the Spirit hither, and from his seat at God’s right

hand will return *for the judgment*; finally, it is the message of salvation brought by Jesus the Saviour, that is, freedom from the tyranny of demons, sin, and death, together with the gift of life eternal.

“Then it is objective and negative, inasmuch as it announces the vanity of all other gods, and forms a protest against idols of gold and silver and wood, as well as against blind fate and atheism.

“Finally, it is subjective, as it declares the uselessness of all sacrifice, all temples, and all worship of man’s devising, and opposes to these the worship of God in spirit and in truth, assurance of faith, holiness and self-control, love and brotherliness, and lastly the solid certainty of the resurrection and of life eternal, implying the futility of a present life which lies exposed to future judgment.”⁵

⁵“The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries,” I. 108-110. Jülicher, “Introduction to the New Testament,” p. 46, also attaches importance to this

Any one enjoying a tolerable acquaintance with the earliest Christian Apologists knows how largely this theism of Christianity bulked in the earliest sub-apostolic presentation and defense of the gospel. For the course pursued there was ample apostolic precedent. If sometimes we are disposed to wonder at the meagerness of the post-apostolic Christian message, we must remember the stupidity and darkness and superstition of that heathen world into which the gospel was introduced and through which it moved with such enlightening power.⁶ Though he had forerunners, not only

passage as indicating the contents of Paul's missionary preaching and his manner of "speaking to an audience of Gentiles who had never heard the name of Christ before, and to whom he had first to explain the fundamental religious ideas of repentance, of faith in the one true God, of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment."

⁶"Perhaps the most needful preparation for appreciating the beliefs of the early Church is to get rid of the assumption or impression that the post-apostolic

like St. Stephen, but humble Christian men and women whose very names have perished who carried the gospel all the way to Rome, and colleagues, like Barnabas and Silas and Timothy, it is the everlasting greatness and glory of the Apostle Paul that he systematically undertook and successfully accomplished the transplanting of Christianity from Palestine to the Roman Empire. "Hereby alone Paul proves himself to be the foremost inter-

Church started with the fullness of the apostolic teaching as that is embodied, for instance, in the New Testament. That is a natural assumption, and it is often made without a thought; but it is entirely opposed to facts. What the apostles and some others of their generation taught is one thing; what the Church proved able to receive is quite another. The tradition of the apostolic ministry was vivid; the writings embodying its message, which we still possess, were circulating, and they were soon collected and set apart as a special deposit. But the Church, which had a glowing sense of the worth of Christianity, had as yet laid but feeble and partial hold on its treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—Robert Rainy, "The Ancient Catholic Church," pp. 66, 67.

preter of Jesus," says Wernle, though he is pleased to add, "in spite of his deviations from the message of the Twelve."⁷ With true historic insight, he later adds, "the communities in which the Spirit finds a habitation are destined to alter the current of the world's history."⁸

The general contrast between the Gospels and the Epistles has been often pointed out, and is easily recognized by the general reader. The Gospels,—at least the first three,—are filled with the accounts of the deeds and teachings of Jesus. Miracles, parables, and discourses of wider compass and more general content, may fairly be said to constitute the substance of the Synoptists' narrative. Little place is given to the Person of Jesus, to his preëxistence, incarnation, and divinity. There is no systematic exposition of the meaning of his death or of the need or significance of atonement. If the

⁷"Beginnings of Christianity," I. 178.

⁸*Ibid.*, I. 191.

resurrection is an exception, it is because it lies so obviously—so conspicuously—in the region of history and fact, where its place must first be made good before it can be utilized in the doctrinal system of the first interpreters of Jesus. In the Gospels the noble ethics of Jesus are expounded and illustrated, as in the Sermon on the Mount; the disciples are taught the spirit, and even a form, of prayer; the law, even if by quotation, is summarized in two matchlessly comprehensive commandments; the golden rule is stated; and life in general is brought under the immediate inspection and guidance of the Father, apparently without emphasis on the mediation of the Son. When we turn to the Epistles, all this is changed. The paucity of the portrayal of the life and teachings of Jesus in the Epistles of Paul has often been remarked upon. His Christology and his knowledge of the personal words and works of Jesus seem to be in inverse proportion. It is true that sometimes the deepest and

most systematic and explicit Christological doctrines are introduced in a very familiar way and subordinated to practical ends, as when the great Philippian passage⁹ opens with the exhortation, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." But, in general, it may be said that preëxistence, deity, incarnation, sacrificial death, justification or the forgiveness of sins, sanctification, the resurrection of Jesus, his enthronement and return to judgment, constitute parts of a closely articulated doctrinal system, in which little place is found for the precepts and parables of the Gospels. It is usual to trace the greater part of this system, and sometimes the whole of it, to the experience of Paul at his conversion on the way to Damascus, with all the legalistic struggles that preceded it and the deliverance and peace that followed it. About the most extreme presentation of this general position,—

⁹Phil. ii. 5-11.

whose strength does not need to be exaggerated,—that I have recently encountered is found in the words of Wernle, of whose historic conjury it is a stock trick to represent falsehood as mightier than the truth. “Jesus was presented to the Greeks in the shape of a mythical drama,” he says. “Once again they had a new myth, and that, too, derived from the immediate present. And this conquered the world.” Indeed! It is surely open to question whether the man who could fling off such a careless statement is entitled to recognition either as historian or as theologian. He adds:

“The simple teaching of Jesus of Nazareth had never been able thus to win its way to victory, for the world was not yet ripe to receive the impression of a great personality by itself. That which was great and redemptive in Jesus had to suffer itself to be wrapped up in the heavy coverings of dogma; even in St. Paul it lives and works mightily therein. In spite of all, it must be deemed fortunate that

Jesus was preached to the world by St. Paul."¹⁰

Such paradoxes of the failure and death of truth unless it assumes the guise and armor of falsehood, in which alone it becomes conqueror and heir of the world, can hardly masquerade in the light of modern knowledge as final historical verdicts. It is really pitiful how often Wernle indulges in this little piece of fanciful sophistry, and how uniformly he finds the transformation of truth into falsehood to be "fortunate" for the gospel or the indispensable condition of its survival.¹¹ Satan himself

¹⁰"Beginnings of Christianity," I. 254.

¹¹I append a few examples. "Jesus the Redeemer, not the lawgiver, that was his [St. Paul's] watchword. It was a great piece of good fortune for Christianity. As a mere teacher of true religion Jesus would only have taken his place in the ranks of the Greek moral philosophers by the side of Socrates or Pythagoras. As such he would doubtless have commanded respect and admiration, but never the faith which gives birth to a religion. Paul saved Christianity from the fate of stag-

must have been the providence who so uniformly at the great crises brought forward falsehood to serve the ends of truth.

nation as a school of ethics in the universal Greek rationalism." ("Beginnings," I. 176, 177.) It is seldom that one reads anything so shallow as this in what purports to be history. Here are a few more supremely fortunate Pauline falsehoods. "The consequence of this [Pauline rabbinical use of the Old Testament] is that the Old Testament and its God are saved; the God of Jesus Christ is also the God of Abraham. In a later age the whole assault of the gnostics beat in vain against this rock of apologetics. And thus even this artificial proof from Scripture turned out to be a piece of good fortune for the Church." (*Ibid.*, I. 309.) "In St. Paul's controversies with Jews and Judaizers, the great ideas of moral liberty and of sonship to God are striving for a clear utterance. They fail to find an outer form such as to insure their victory; nevertheless it was fortunate for the whole future history of Christianity that they were connected so closely with its origin." (*Ibid.*, I. 313.) "It is perfectly incredible within how short a time the Jesus of history had to undergo this radical transformation" into the Christ of dogma; yet "it is for this living and loving Jesus that the apostle's high

But the general truth of this contrast between the earlier and the later parts of the New Testament must be accepted. We must always remember, however, that the Gospels, though holding the first position in our arrangement of the canon, and depicting events earlier than those recorded in the Epistles, are really of later composition, and issued from the bosom of that Apostolic Church to which Paul and Apollos and Cephas had already been given and which was in daily enjoyment of that living experience which the Epistles describe. The greatest gift of the Apostolic Church to the Christianity of all time to the

Christology paves a way into the world." (*Ibid.*, I. 339.) Did falsehood ever play a nobler part in the history of humanity and of religion? Finally (I. 340), "Christianity only became a great spiritual power in the world through the theology of St. Paul." Yet this theology,—in its cosmology, Christology, and eschatology,—was nothing but an effete Jewish mythology! Surely paradox and absurdity can proceed to no greater lengths.

end of the world is the Gospels. That there is no trace of later times discernible on the broad face of our Gospels no competent critic will assert. That the historical figure of Jesus, and a true and objective record of his teachings, have been preserved, sober criticism may assert and successfully defend in the face of all the world.¹² This is the achievement of the Apostolic Church. Pfleiderer, Wernle, and

¹²So Jülicher, despite the freedom, not to say license, of his criticism: "The Synoptic Gospels are of priceless value, not only as books of religious edification, but also as authorities for the history of Jesus. . . . The true merit of the Synoptists is that, in spite of all the poetic touches they employ, they did not repaint, but only handed on, the Christ of history."—"Introduction to N. T.," p. 371. "It sounds paradoxical to say so, but the history of the Synoptic tradition stretches back to the very lifetime of Jesus. Within a short time after the appearance of the Messiah, certain particularly striking words of his were spread abroad in ever-widening circles, while the fame of his miracles penetrated through the length and breadth of the Jewish lands."—*Ibid.*, p. 374.

their kind, may indulge their childish prattle about "myths" to their hearts' content; others may talk of the lack of the scientific historical sense in that age of the world. The truth remains. Urged on by some sense of solemn responsibility to distant lands and unborn generations which perhaps they themselves could not analyze or fully understand; bent solely, amid all their limitations and disabilities born of the age in which they lived, upon getting the truth about the words and deeds of Jesus on record,—that humble reformed publican whose life had been redeemed by the might of Jesus, remembered his old facility with the pen when he sat at the receipt of custom, and began his collection of the discourses—the "logia"—of Jesus;¹³ that companion of St. Pe-

¹³"Papias tells us that the Apostle Matthew inaugurated this period of writing down (of course in the popular dialect of Palestine) a collection of Sayings of the Lord. . . . We do not doubt the statement of Papias, and it is to the eternal credit of the primitive

ter's who had listened again and again to the substance of his missionary preaching be-thought himself to make that primary statement of "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," which survives to this day in St. Mark as the oldest of our Gospels; that companion of St. Paul's, who had

community that it preserved to the Church the Jesus of history, as well as the Christ of the believer's reflection. We know nothing definite as to the motives which induced this apostle to take up his pen, but it can only have been when the number of ear-witnesses of the words of Jesus had considerably diminished, and the need arose of handing on the substance of his Gospel, under the authority of an eye-witness and in permanent form (*i. e.*, in writing) to a rising generation who had neither heard nor seen the Lord. . . . How opportune was the undertaking of Matthew was proved by its success; even in the Greek communities it was soon felt to be indispensable, and preachers interpreted it as well as they could until good written translations did away with the necessity of such separate efforts, and at last supplanted the Aramaic original altogether."—Jülicher, "Introduction to N. T.," pp. 378, 379.

the instincts if not the habits of an historian, used the work of Mark and of Matthew and of all others of whose trustworthiness and value he could satisfy himself; and, lastly, as I believe will be finally demonstrated by convincing internal and external testimonies, the aged Apostle John wrote with his own hand, out of the fullness of his personal knowledge, the unique and incomparable Gospel which bears his name. But, apart from all the critical inquiries which may be started, and have been started, in connection with the Fourth Gospel, the Synoptical Gospels stand as the monumental contribution of the general Apostolic Church to the historical foundations of Christianity. The Church of the Apostles gave birth to these Gospels, and if, without the guidance of the canons of historical research or the rules of modern historical composition, that Church produced records so manifestly objective and truth-telling, the general result may be set down to the credit of an absolute

loyalty to Jesus, of an unflinching fidelity to fact, and of the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

But, before proceeding to a general exposition of the causes of the acknowledged contrast between the Gospels and the Epistles, I desire to put in two pleas in abatement when the narrowness and simple historical narration of the Gospels are set over against the universalism and doctrinal contents of the Epistles. One of these pleas is based on the contents of the Gospels, the other on those of the Epistles. Both may be exhibited in a brief analysis and summary.

1. The universal destination of the gospel and the divine self-consciousness of Jesus may be collected with certainty, if from relatively few, yet from indisputably genuine, sayings of record in the first three Gospels. The whole question at issue may be said to turn here. If this point be made out, then the short and easy method of mythologists like

Pfleiderer¹⁴ and Wernle, the latter of whom does not hesitate to say that the Gospel of John is a mere writing back into the history of the purely dogmatic and apocalyptic and mythical Christology of Paul, is cut up by the roots. It is set aside as a mere conjecture of unbelieving criticism, which is not supported by direct and convincing historical evidence, but simply commends itself to the critical faculty as an hypothesis certainly broad enough to explain the facts, *if it be assumed that Jesus himself did not evince his possession of a divine self-consciousness and did not preach a gospel of universal significance.* But, if an impartial examination of the Synoptical Gospels, in the light of the severest critical judgments, establishes the divine self-consciousness of Jesus and the universal destination of the gospel as he

¹⁴"The Early Christian Conception of Christ." See review of this book in Appendix.

preached it, the position of Wernle and Pfleiderer and many others not only becomes untenable but is rendered superfluous and impertinent. In such a life-and-death struggle, involving a hand-to-hand conflict with the forces of unbelief as they have intrenched themselves in the works of professedly Christian theologians, it may be necessary for the time to seem to abandon the outposts and to fall back upon the central impregnable citadels of defense. Thus we all know that our present Gospel of Matthew is not identical with the original collection of Hebrew or Aramaic discourses made by the apostle. The capable investigators of the Synoptical problem are practically unanimous in the conclusion that the narrative sections of our present Matthew are mainly dependent on Mark, while Luke, with the exception of one great section peculiar to himself, largely derives his parables and speeches from the same (or a similar) collection originally made by Matthew and

preserved, for the most part, in the Gospel which goes by his name. When we find, therefore, that the divine self-consciousness of Jesus is clearly revealed in a passage like Matt. xi. 25-30, Luke x. 21-24, which was subjected to a critical examination and interpretation in the light of modern scholarship in the chapter on "The Vocation of Jesus"—when we find that the divine self-consciousness here shines out with dazzling brightness in an utterance of our Lord's that can be traced back to that apostolic collection of discourses, common to both Luke and our present Matthew, we need not concern ourselves at present with the examination of the critical difficulties which have been raised in connection with the baptismal formula as a post-resurrection utterance of our Lord's. Similarly when our Lord, in common discourse with the people, speaks of himself as "a greater than Jonas" and "a greater than Solomon"¹⁵ we need not

¹⁵Matt. xii. 41, 42.

go to Jewish theology and Messianic apocalypses, especially when of uncertain date, to find out what he meant; for the context of the very book in which the reference to Jonah and Solomon occurs contains the explicit revelation of the divine consciousness that was in the speaker. If we doubt the controversies recorded by St. John which Jesus is represented as having concerning his own person with the Jews in the temple courts at Jerusalem, what parable more evidently proceeded from our Lord's lips than the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen and the Slain Son delivered during passion week in that selfsame place? That Son is expressly distinguished from the servants of the householder, and of him, even in the hour of his weakness and death, Jesus says, in indisputably prophetic words, of which all history is the fulfillment, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner"; immediately adding his forecast of the conquering march

and universal destination of the kingdom, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."¹⁶ And whosoever shall fall on

¹⁶The first demand upon *criticism* is that it be *critical*, and not mere subjective arbitrariness. It is singular how Harnack and Wernle cancel each other in their views of this passage. Harnack denies that this conclusion of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen contains a reference to the Gentile mission. "The words of Matt. xxi. 43," he says, "do not refer to the Gentiles; it is the 'nation' as opposed to the official Israel." ("Expansion of Christianity," footnote, I. 42.) This is but the subterfuge, possibly unconscious, of a critic who has committed himself to the exclusion of the universal mission from the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. (See p. 40.) Wernle reaches this passage after finding in Matt. xvi. 18 the first utterance of "Roman Petrine tradition and the consciousness of Roman power." "For the first time, too, and surely not merely by chance, the Church and the kingdom are almost identified in this important ecclesiastical document," *i. e.*, St. Matthew's Gospel. "In a passage peculiar to St. Matthew," he proceeds, "Jesus says to the Jews, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' What is the kingdom

this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.”¹⁷ If difficulties can be started in connection with the great commission as a word from the mouth of Jesus, none can vitiate the teaching of the indisputably genuine parable of the Good Samaritan which expressly aims at the destruction of the spirit which confines religion within national and ecclesiastical boundaries. And it was a heathen soldier of the

of God that the Jews have possessed? It is not, as in other passages, the future Messianic kingdom, but the theocracy, the divine rule. The evangelist might just as well have said, ‘Ye shall no longer be the Church.’” (“Beginnings of Christianity,” II. 85.) Thus Harnack arbitrarily deprives the words of their natural meaning and force, while Wernle sees in them only the embodiment of late ecclesiastical polemic between Christians and Jews. Both positions are unworthy the name of criticism, and are absolutely worthless for the removal of the Gentile mission from the teachings of Jesus. They afford an excellent illustration of the truth that the overthrow of *criticism* is found in *better criticism*.

¹⁷Matt. xxi. 33-44.

Empire, the Capernaum centurion, at the beauty and solidity of whose character, in its humanity, liberality, humility, and faith, Jesus marveled; and, in the light of whose conduct and example he was moved to say, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into outer darkness."¹⁸ Jesus told his earliest disciples that they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world;¹⁹ and yet there are those who deny the primitive missionary character and charter of his Church and the universal destination of the gospel as he preached it.

2. The Epistles, if predominantly doctrinal, are by no means destitute of historical reminiscences of the teachings and works of Jesus.

¹⁸Matt. viii. 10-12. ¹⁹Matt. v. 13, 14.

We have just seen how the first page of the New Testament, as we have it in the first chapter of First Thessalonians, presupposes the general currency and acceptance of Jesus' teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God. Despite many blemishes and shortcomings, some of which were of a serious nature, the early testimony is unanimous that a life of extraordinary purity and elevation was lived in the new communities. The Pauline Epistles everywhere bear witness to the deep reality of religious experience, and the precepts of Jesus are reflected in the life of love enjoined by the apostle. Moreover, as has often been indicated, the great outlines of the life of Jesus,—his birth of the lineage of David, his call of chosen men to the apostolate, his institution of the Supper, his betrayal and shameful death, and his resurrection,—may be easily gathered out of the Epistles. That more of the life and teachings were not directly conveyed to the Gentile Churches may be regretted; but we

must also consider what was possible in the great transplantation of Christianity in which St. Paul was the principal agent, and the need of simplification in preaching "Jesus and the resurrection,"²⁰ or "Christ and him crucified,"²¹ if these were really the saving facts and truths of the gospel.

With this statement of two pleas in abatement as gathered out of the contents of the Gospels and the Epistles, respectively, I may now proceed to an examination of the grounds of the admitted general contrast between the Christianity of the Gospels and the Christianity of the Epistles.

We must endeavor to transport ourselves out of the records of history, as contained in our documents, into the region of history itself,—an actual succession of objective events in the real life of the world. Unless they possessed an unusual importance in the view of the writers, quite disproportionate space is de-

²⁰Acts xvii. 18. ²¹1 Cor. ii. 2.

voted in each of the Gospels to the last week of our Lord's life, from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the resurrection. It is, indeed, difficult for us to realize the unparalleled impression made upon the apostles, and the revolution and creation of conviction, brought about by these final events. What had occurred? (1) There had been the solemn institution of the memorial feast of the Lord's Supper, with which, our accounts authorize us to believe, there had been connected moving instruction on the significance of Jesus' death on the morrow. (2) The betrayal, arrest, and trials before the ecclesiastical and civil authorities followed. (3) The crucifixion on Friday was an awful termination of the holy life of the great and innocent Master who had gone about doing good. (4) The resurrection, with the appearances on that first Easter Sunday, furnished the tremendous climax of this tremendous week. To these events must be added (5) the intercourse of the forty

days; (6) the ascension; (7) Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit, and the birthday of the Christian Church.

Let us confine our attention to these seven events, each of them, we may well believe, of inexhaustible significance, through which the apostles must look back to the deeds and teachings of our Lord's ministry.

First of all, the events themselves must have fastened and fascinated the minds of the disciples. One needs only to allow the full impression of the freshness and vigor of the opening chapters of Acts to sink into his intelligence to recognize the inimitable reality of a living picture. The real character of Jesus, as Lord and Christ, repentance, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost were the themes of St. Peter's preaching even before the conversion of St. Paul.

Secondly, these events at the last recalled and reinterpreted all that Jesus had done and taught, especially his anticipations and instruc-

tions concerning these very occurrences. From the time of Peter's confession in Cesarea Philippi "began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."²² That Jesus himself had not been indifferent to the question of his Person is shown by the question he himself propounded in Cesarea Philippi, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"²³ Six days after this appeal of the Master, the confession of the rock apostle, and the conversation concerning the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, and the resurrection which should follow, occurred the transfiguration of Jesus in the high mountain apart. According to all the Synoptical Gospels, these events marked the crisis of our Lord's public ministry, *and the whole series centers directly in himself.*

²²Matt. xvi. 21. ²³Matt. xvi. 13.

When the fulfillment of the Saviour's predictions came with such overwhelming might, his own teachings about himself, and revelations of himself, were, doubtless, for the first time grasped in their real and full significance.

But, it may be said, if the transition from the Christianity of the Gospels to the Christianity of the Epistles is to be explained by the interposition of this series of (say) seven events of a character so extraordinary and miraculous that they forever made Jesus himself the foundation of his religion,—nay, the very religion itself,—let us not forget that the transactions themselves belong to a category of which scientific history can take no account. It might be answered in a word, All the worse for scientific history, which thus begs the question and declines to attempt the solution of the most urgent problem in the world's life! But let that pass. The queer thing is that the scientific historians, like Keim, Wernle, and company, have so little confidence in their own

historical canons, and are so overwhelmed by the evidence contained in the simple, objective records which have come down to our times, that they are never content simply to cut out this section of our Lord's career and cast it aside as nothing worth. *They always manage to bring it back into the circuit of history as the determining factor in the whole subsequent development.* And thereby they do exactly what St. Peter did in his earliest preaching and what St. Paul does in all his Epistles. Let us consider the resurrection alone. If this be allowed, all the rest follows with it. Take Wernle's treatment as typical:

“Contrary to all expectations, the dispersed disciples began to gather together again, at first in Galilee and then in Jerusalem. ‘He is not dead,’ they cried in triumphant enthusiasm to the murderers of Jesus; ‘he liveth.’ The reckoning of the Sanhedrists turned out to be at fault. Their clever calculations proved to be the greatest folly and impolicy, for faith in

the crucified and risen Lord brought about that which faith in the living Christ had not accomplished: the foundation of the new Church, the separation from Judaism, the conquest of the world.

“Whence this sudden change? For that the disciples fled in confusion and consternation is a certain fact. Their answer was: the Lord has appeared to us, first to Peter, then to the twelve, then to more than five hundred brethren together, then to James, then to all of the apostles, last of all to Paul. From these appearances,—the first must have taken place, according to the oldest accounts, in Galilee,—they inferred the facts of the resurrection and of the present life of Jesus in glory. In the very earliest time, when St. Paul obtained this information from St. Peter, they were content with drawing these conclusions and required no further proofs. The new faith rests upon the appearances alone.

“Our judgment as to these appearances de-

pend upon the credibility which we attach to St. Paul and his informant, and still more upon our philosophical and religious standpoint, upon our 'faith.' Purely scientific considerations cannot decide where the question at stake is the existence or nonexistence of the invisible world, and the possibility of communicating with spirits. Hence, too, all attempts at explanation, which rest upon the axiom that our world of phenomena is the only reality, are merely subjectively persuasive and convincing. The Christian faith always reckons with the reality of the other world which is our goal. A Christian, therefore, has no difficulty in accepting as the ground of his belief in the resurrection, the real projection of Jesus into this world of sense by means of a vision."²⁴

A variety of reflections almost spontaneously arises in the mind of a fairly thoughtful

²⁴"Beginnings of Christianity," I. 114, 115.

reader of this passage. In the first place, we catch our young friend,—“professor extraordinarius” in a German university,—despite his wondrous sleight of hand, in the very act of playing his old trick. Faith in the crucified and risen Lord,—that is, the Christianity of the Epistles, which is false,—accomplishes the founding of the Church and the conquest of the world! a task utterly impossible to faith in the living Christ,—that is, the Christianity of the Gospels, which is true! Really we must be excused from seriously considering a position which takes refuge in such legerdemain as this. In the next place, if St. Paul is a competent and veracious witness,—and what character in history is furnished with better credentials (2 Cor. xi. 22-28)?—neither science nor philosophy, unless it be materialism, hinders the Christian from believing the resurrection to have been “the real projection of Jesus into this world of sense.” In other words, (1) if the fact of the resurrection rests

upon the credibility of testimony, (2) if it is a question which purely scientific considerations are incompetent to decide, (3) if idealistic philosophy can afford to laugh to scorn the mere suggestion that "our world of phenomena is the only reality," or that it is ontologically real at all,—all of which are positions accepted by Herr Wernle,—then the sane and serious theologian need not be troubled in the smallest degree about how this brilliant young professor explains the fact, or about the further reasons which he proceeds to assign for not believing it. Our final reflection must resolve itself into an expression of mere wonder that a man who possesses the great learning and ability which Professor Wernle evinces in many parts of his work could dismiss so grave a subject with a mere airy wave of the hand. But it is enough that Wernle, though he insists upon his paradox and absurdity of its falsehood, allows that the resurrection was the foundation of the Church and of the conquest

of the world! Thus the resurrection was at once *nothing* and *everything*, and our scientific historian has without difficulty solved his problem.

The conclusion which a really historical consideration of the development of the Church forces upon the candid and careful inquirer is that the full and complete reconciliation of the Christianity of the Gospels,—the Christianity of Christ, as it is sometimes called,—with the Christianity of the Epistles, or of the Apostles, is found in the overwhelmingly great series of actual occurrences which intervened between the close of the public ministry of our Lord and the day of Pentecost. It is with great difficulty that we can live again the life of that generation. Since Christianity is transmitted to us by an infinitely precious collection of sacred writings, it is very difficult for us to realize, with the first generation of Christians, who had no New Testament, that the foundation of the Church and of its conquest of the

world,—in a word, of Christendom,—is not a book but a Person—a divine Person who lived a life, and died a death, “for our sins,”²⁵ and rose again from the dead, and being by the right hand of God exalted received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and poured forth the Christian Church of the centuries. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”²⁶ Only when we pass from history as record to history as fact do we dig to the deepest foundation of the Church in the sacrificial death and the glorious resurrection of the incarnate Son of God. There is no breach between this conception of the salvation wrought out by Jesus and the ethics and history of the spiritual life which fall from his lips in the Gospels. They were consistently united in the faith and life of the Apostolic Church, and the same living synthesis exists in the experience and conduct of

²⁵1 Cor. xv. 3. ²⁶1 Cor. iii. 11.

thousands of saints to-day. The separate records which we have in Gospels and Epistles have merely divided in the New Testament what from the beginning, *i. e.*, from Pentecost, existed as one whole in the life of the Church and in the experience of the individual Christian. While some of the view points and experiences of Apostolic Christianity are undoubtedly written back even into a few sayings of Jesus as recorded in our Gospels,²⁷ the outstanding and overshadowing fact is that so truly and objectively did the Apostolic Church perform its task of drawing the picture of Je-

²⁷So Shailer Mathews, "The Messianic Hope in the New Testament," p. 225: "The original materials of the Gospels, as we have already seen, may be accepted as the work of the disciples of Jesus himself, but the Synoptic Gospels, as completed literary units, represent to a considerable degree the point of view of the Church during the last quarter of the first century." This truth is sufficiently recognized in the text above, but, in order to a true historical perspective, needs to be supplemented by the statement "the outstanding and overshadowing fact is that so truly and objectively did the Apostolic Church perform its task," etc.

sus as he lived and taught that the contrast is faithfully preserved between the days of the Son of man and those of his followers who planted the Church after his departure from the world. The problem of the literature,—the contrast of Gospels and Epistles,—is created by the fidelity of those who produced it.

The title of this chapter was suggested by the language (quoted in a footnote on an earlier page) of Dr. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, than whom Germany has produced no greater exegete. It is but just to cite it here (in part) again: “Hence the *κείμενος θεμέλιος* is that laid by God, namely, *Jesus Christ himself*, the *fundamentum essentiale*, he whom God sent, delivered up to death, raised again, and exalted, thereby making him to be for us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. . . . This is the *objective foundation* which *lies there* for the whole of Christendom.”²⁸

²⁸“Commentary,” I Cor. iii. 11.

IV

BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH

(151)

BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.¹

I. CHRISTIANITY AS AN HISTORICAL RELIGION AMENABLE TO THE CANONS OF HIS- TORICAL SCIENCE.

WHAT are the foundations of the Christian faith in its Protestant form? The Reformers, accepting the character accorded the Bible in both the Jewish and the Romish Churches, substituted for the infallible Church, with its organ of Council or Pope, the infallible Bible, inerrant in letter, and interpreted, nominally by the individual, but practically by the several symbols framed by the Reformation parties and peoples. This action was both polemically and historically justifiable, if not inevitable: since it was an appeal to a pure antiquity, in its pre-

¹A paper read at the Third Ecumenical Methodist Conference, London, Sept., 1901.

sumably authentic records, against the recognized corruptions of a degenerate present.

1. But is the truth of Christianity dependent upon the preservation of an inerrant record? To state the question in this form is to answer it with a negative. For Christianity is an historical religion which arose in a definite time and place; which was promoted by personal agents, who can be recognized and described; and which left behind it concrete and world-wide results, distinct and determinate in our day, and capable of being traced to their origin. If inerrant records are the necessary base of the science of history, then is scientific history, in any form or sphere, civil or ecclesiastical, impossible. On the contrary, all history worthy of the name begins with documentary criticism and the assortment and valuation of the available data. Christianity can be no exception to this uniform procedure of history. Nor need it be.

Moreover, the distinction must be definitely

made between history external and objective, a series of events in the actual order of the life of the world, and history as mere narrative or record. The criticism of history as record is expressly that we may arrive at history as fact. The fact is antecedent, the record consequent; the fact is independent and exists, so to speak, in its own right and by its own force; while the record is dependent and relative, produced by force of the fact. In the sphere of historical Christianity the recognition of this self-evident principle is not, on the one hand, to fall into the Romish error of exalting tradition to an equal authority with Holy Scripture; nor, on the other, is it to accept the Anglican High-church heresy of the supremacy of the Church because the Apostolic Church produced the New Testament.

(1) In the presence of the High Anglican it may be freely granted that the Christian Church is older than the New Testament, and has existed as a concrete, living reality in the world from the beginning till now; but to these

obvious facts must be added the further fact that, if the first generation of Christians produced the New Testament, as a record of the source and spring and dominating type of Christian life, so the New Testament, not by virtue of any ecclesiastical definition of the canon, and not by any dogmatic assignment of exclusive authority or inerrancy, but because against all claimants it asserts historically its own truth as a contemporaneous record and as the living Word of God, has begotten and nourished every generation of Christians since the first.

(2) In the presence of the Romanist, without any theoretical denial of his principle of tradition, we may show that in view of the achievements of modern historical science, the only defensible sense of this term tradition is history; and that, without any dogmatic determination of its exclusive authority, or its canonical limits, or its inerrancy as a record, the New Testament, under the sifting processes of criticism, effectively transmits to the present

generation a genuine historical deposit and achieves for itself the character of an authoritative and exclusive source. These same principles, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the Old Testament.

Hear the conclusion of the matter considered from the historical point of view: Christianity is an historically founded religion, living its historically traceable life in the world since the day of its birth, and exhibiting itself as the most real and stupendous fact of the present. Therefore, historical science alone can primarily transcend the dogmatic differences of Romanist, Anglican, and Protestant concerning the rule of faith and kindred questions, and lay solidly and permanently, not indeed in the realm of fact, but in the realm of conviction and personal belief, the massive foundations of the Christian faith.

2. So far as the Old Testament, in our day the especial subject of literary and historical criticism, is concerned, we may accept the ver-

dict of the Rev. S. R. Driver, who has given us the most careful and scholarly, at once the most candid and the most modest, treatise in English on Old Testament Introduction. "It is not the case that critical conclusions, such as those expressed in the present volume," says Dr. Driver, in his rewritten sixth edition, "are in conflict either with the Christian creeds or with the articles of the Christian faith. These conclusions affect not the fact of revelation, but only its form. They help to determine the stages through which it passed, the different phases which it assumed, and the process by which the record of it was built up. They do not touch either the authority or the inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old Testament."

The publication in the last few years of such books as McCurdy's "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments"; Rogers's "History of Babylonia and Assyria"; and Sayce's "Higher Criticism and the Monuments" and "Early Israel and the Surrounding Nations," with others

that might be mentioned, has familiarized the popular mind with the fact that there has been preserved a veritable historical record parallel, generally speaking, with that contained in the Old Testament, and serving valuable ends of elucidation and verification. Sayce and Hommel may have considerably exaggerated the value of these independent historical materials for the refutation of the literary and documentary analyses of higher criticism. But historians will find higher and more constructive uses for these records unearthed by the pick and the spade than those of mere polemics.

The data are in hand, and are daily increasing, for a positive historical reconstruction of that great ancient world of western Asia of which the life of Israel was a part. However the relative political or commercial importance of Israel may have suffered by the uncovering of this wider world, in which the Hebrews but seldom played a leading part, there is incalculable gain in the securing of a correct historical

perspective and in the illumination and completion of what remains obscure or fractional in the Old Testament. What once stood alone in that ancient record, moreover, is now vouched for by many witnesses, telling of the same events from the standpoint of the party of the other part, and corroborating, with independent freedom, what prophets and historians had set down in the sacred books of the Jews. Such are the priceless gifts which the science of history is now bestowing upon the interpretation of the Old Testament and upon the origins and early developments of revealed religion.

II. THE HISTORICAL PERSON AND TEACHING OF THE DIVINE CHRIST.

In the second place, the science of history as concerned with the New Testament has surely, if at times slowly and painfully, led us back to the historical Jesus, who is himself the Alpha and Omega of the Christian religion. A great

body of Christ's own teaching is secure. This teaching is not only, for the most part, rationally and ethically self-evidencing, apart from the record that contains it, but it is also historically traceable to the lips of Jesus, and becomes, historically and ethically, the norm and standard of all revelation contained in Holy Scripture. The notion of the equal value of every part of Scripture for ethics and religion is no longer a formula to which the Christian is required to give his assent. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," is the measured language of our Article of Religion. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount cut from the neck of the Christian Church the millstone of the ethics of the Conquest of Canaan. The parable of the Lost Son is the uncovering of the heart of God by the hand of his Son, and the imperishable apologetic of the Christian faith framed by its Founder and Head. The Beatitudes are an immeasurable advance on the Tables of the

Law, and should preferably be engraven on the heart of every Christian child. Moreover, while Jesus pronounced upon no modern critical question of date or authorship, the freedom of his attitude toward Moses, everywhere evinced in his discourses, may be taken as the warrant of the privilege and the duty of historical criticism. When Jesus said that Moses for the hardness of their hearts suffered the Israelites to put away their wives, he proved himself a critic of the keenest insight, for he at once explained the temporary exception and condemned it as a rule of life by the weight of eternal truth. At the same time we must remember that the Old Testament, with which we deal, is the Bible of Jesus' personal edification and of his public ministry, and that, while he has set us the example of a great "discrimination," to use the aptly chosen word of Professor George Adam Smith, "what was indispensable to the Redeemer," if I may again adopt the language

of this scholar, "must always be indispensable to the redeemed."

Let us remind ourselves, also, that the body of teaching traceable to the lips of Jesus is not confined to the Synoptical Gospels. More and more the phenomena of the Fourth Gospel attest its composition by an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus, and fix its date well within the limits of the first Christian century. I am not unaware of the radical attitude toward the evangelical tradition assumed by one of our two new Bible dictionaries. Indeed, I exercised the privilege of transferring to the pages of the journal which I have the honor to edit the masterly exposé of the radical positions of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which proceeded from the able pen of the present honored President of the British Conference, and recent Fraternal Delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. But, despite such radical defections, and the grievous hurt to the common

Christian cause resulting from such publications, the Gospel of John,—for the Gospel of the Apostle it is,—steadily wins its way to a wider and more assured critical acceptance.

It unites two apparently irreconcilable characters: (1) a marvelous minuteness of narrative detail and vividness of picturesque reproduction far surpassing anything found in the Synoptical Gospels; and (2) an absoluteness of universal and final statement of the profoundest truths of the Gospel which befits it as the conclusion and crown of the literature of the New Testament. Both these characteristics equally bespeak first-hand knowledge; while its independent scheme of chronology, and the general freedom and firmness of the author's deviations from the Synoptical tradition, both by omission and addition, attest the accuracy and certainty of his knowledge, and his unchallenged apostolic position and authority in the closing decades of the first century. The Eternal Divine Word Incar-

nate, whose nature and relations with the Father and the world are revealed in the Fourth Gospel with a precision and completeness which dogmatic theology may imitate, but cannot surpass, and yet in unfailing harmony with the lowlier and more human representations of the Synoptical tradition, becomes the sole and sure and sufficient foundation of the Christian faith. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

III. CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

The third and final foundation of the faith to which I would invite attention in this connection is Christian experience. I may introduce the subject with the words of the late Professor W. Robertson Smith: "The persuasion that in the Bible God himself speaks words of love and life to the soul is the essence of the Christian conviction as to the truth and authority of Scripture. . . . The

element of personal conviction, which lifts faith out of the region of probable evidence into the sphere of divine certainty, is given only by the Holy Spirit still bearing witness in and with the Word." We might suspect that these were the words of an historical skeptic offering us stones for bread, were it not that the "*testimonium Spiritus Sancti*," in the absence of all critical controversy, had long before been unanimously appealed to by the Reformers as the supreme and final warrant of Holy Scripture; and were it not further true that our Methodist doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, if confined to the single point of our knowledge that we are the children of God, is, by common consent of competent theologians, too narrow. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things," and John Wesley, with a spirit of prophecy in this, as in the case of the lower criticism (as indicated by a comparison of the text of his Notes on the New Testament with that of the Revisers of

1881, or of Westcott and Hort), anticipated Schleiermacher and the theologians of our own day who would verify the entire dogmatic system by analysis of the implicit presuppositions and contents of Christian experience.

This doctrine is no city of refuge, newly formed by theologians for whom the historical foundations have given way. On the contrary, the uniform, definite, and permanent elements of Christian experience, in the conviction and forgiveness of sin, the impartation of life, and the purification of the nature, with the recognition of Father, Son, and Spirit, as the Authors and Agents of this great salvation, constitute a scientifically recognizable and definable phenomenon of age-long and world-wide occurrence. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." The Spirit's revelation of spiritual things to the spiritual man

is thus, not only the normal privilege but the necessary foundation of Christian faith and the Christian life. This truth, which first rose on my soul in full-orbed splendor when, as a young Methodist preacher, I eagerly perused your Dr. Burt Pope's "Compendium of Christian Theology," Methodism has a special commission to preach and to teach. It is not hers by right of discovery, for it has belonged to all the Christian Churches and centuries. It is no peculiar depositum, but it harmonizes with the genius of Methodism in its special emphasis upon Christian experience, and in its assertion of that large liberty wherewith Christ makes all his people free.² The Spirit's

²Professor Friedrich Loofs, of the University of Halle, in the article on Methodism in the new edition of the Hauck-Herzog "Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche," cites with approval this address on "Biblical Criticism and the Christian Faith" as exponential of the present position of Methodism and as "placing by the side of all external criticism the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*." He quotes freely from the text above.

work in the human soul is in perfect conformity with the Spirit's work in the Word; but that which is immediate with me is the guarantee of that record of the experience of prophet and apostle, immediate with them, but conveyed to me through the medium of a written record.

God in the World, God in the Word, God in Christ, God in the Soul,—Creation, Inspiration, Incarnation, Regeneration,—these are doubtless mysteries all, containing at bottom a residuum of the inexplicable. But they are parallel mysteries, each carrying with it a weight of analogical evidence for the truth of all the others, and each in its own sphere an example of that mighty working whereby God is able to subdue all things unto himself. For us the regenerating act of the Holy Ghost is indeed private and personal; but for that very reason, having experienced in our own hearts this solitary union of the divine and human, the presence of God in Nature, in

Christ, and in the Bible, while still mysterious, becomes credible and certain.

Thus the strands (1) of historical Christianity, (2) of the Divine Christ, and (3) of the certainties of Christian experience unite to form a threefold cord which cannot easily be broken. The time for readjustment to the main conclusions of historical criticism has almost fully come. We are not called upon, indeed, for a final judgment upon them all; many things remain in doubt; some, from the insufficiency of the materials at command, will probably always remain in doubt. But the main problems, such as those of the Hexateuch and of Isaiah, appear to have been satisfactorily solved, and, amid considerable differences on details, there is essential agreement among the greater critics as to methods, grounds, and results. So far as I can see, there is no reason to anticipate such a reaction from, and repudiation of, the historical criticism of the Old Testament, as befell the Tü-

bingen criticism of the New; for that criticism was essentially an attempt to rewrite history on the basis of Hegelian *a priori* philosophy. There is nothing common to these two schools and epochs of criticism, and it is unsafe to the last degree to argue from the fate which overtook one to a kindred overthrow which must speedily befall the other.

No; let us not fight as those who beat the air. Rather, possessing the precious pearl and imperishable treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven, sitting at the feet of the incomparable Teacher, the Eternal Divine Word Incarnate, and being guided by the Spirit of the Father and of the Son into all the truth, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, receiving the kingdom which cannot be moved, even though this same profession carries with it the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

NOTE.

It may not be improper to add that the foregoing essay was confined to twenty minutes' reading before the Third Ecumenical Methodist Conference, and was written during the voyage across the Atlantic. It was my intention to revise and enlarge the whole for publication here; but, as the paper has been several times printed and is, in a sense, no longer my property, I have, on second thought, confined the revision to cutting out one or two sentences and the insertion of as many more. I was followed by the Rev. Marshall Randles, D.D., of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in a ten minutes' address on "Recent Corroborations of the Scripture Narratives," and by Chancellor D. S. Stephens, D.D., of the Methodist Protestant Church, in an address of the same length on "The Appeal of the Old Testament to the Life and Conscience of To-day." Whereupon, the floor was first secured by the Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D., then Presi-

dent of the British Wesleyan Conference, and next by the Rev. Joseph Agar Beet, D.D., who spoke five minutes each. My apology for the insertion of their remarks must be found in the fact that they enable the reader to judge how far my very brief and imperfect paper, as commented upon by these able scholars, may be accepted as representing, according to Professor Loofs's use of it, the general position of Methodism, in the Eastern no less than the Western Section of the Ecumenical Conference. *The Methodist Recorder* for September 9, 1901, under the headlines, "A Brief but Important Conversation," "The Doctors do not Differ," thus reproduces

DR. DAVISON'S REMARKS.

"Mr. President and Brethren, I feel quite unequal to making a five minutes' speech upon this great subject, but I have risen in order to say one or two things which I think should be said at this time. The first is to bear my

humble testimony as a representative on the Eastern side to the remarkably able paper of Dr. Tigert to which we have had the opportunity of listening. (Applause.) I will not try at this moment to characterize that timely and able and helpful and suggestive production. I am quite sure that when we come to read it carefully we shall find how much it contains. We had some idea as the paper was somewhat rapidly read, but it needs to be much more carefully read in order to be appreciated. Another thing which I wanted to try to say, if I could, in a minute and a half is this, that God is trying to teach his Church, I believe, at this hour by means of historical and literary criticism as he has taught and guided his Church by other means outside the Church in the course of past ages. We often hear the phrase about more light breaking out of the Holy Word, and it is true that we shall continually find more and more to study in the Book itself. But God teaches us by light

from outside shining upon the Word, and I believe that we have learned a great deal from the relation between Scripture and pure science, and that we have learned a great deal, or we might have learned a great deal, from the relation between scriptural teaching and social theories, and that God has intended to teach his Church by means of these movements round about us, and I hope that we have had grace to learn some lessons. I believe that with regard to the subject of the historical and literary criticism and examination of the Bible as a record which is now proceeding God has many things to teach us. Some of them we have already learned—that human faith as such is an amalgam, and that we have to find out by a process of trial how much of that is human and how much divine. When we examine the historical criticism of the Old Testament, and the historical criticism of the New Testament, which is now causing so much attention, we shall not find it a dif-

difficult thing to separate between those elements which are transitory and those which are permanent. I believe that Dr. Tigert has led us very largely upon the right lines in those two matters. I do not myself think that we should be too anxious about confirmations of the accuracy of the Scripture history in all details whether from archæology or from other sources. We welcome them. I do not think that we need to be anxious about the matter, or to put out anxious hands to catch hold of every possible confirmation and dwell upon it, any more than we need fear on the other side here and there a discrepancy. Rather I believe that attention is being drawn to the spiritual character of that Book which offers us the ultimate ground of appeal, and the authoritative rule of faith and practice—the character of it, the spiritual power of it, and the relation between the Bible and the Church, and between the Bible and Christian consciousness. All these matters are being

brought out, I believe, more clearly than they ever have been before, on account of the historical and literary criticism to which the Bible has been subjected in our generation. There is only one other thing which I wanted to say, and it is this, that as we meet from both sides of the Atlantic I hope that we shall coöperate. I hope that those interested in topics of this kind will coöperate in the defense of our faith. I dare not speak for others—and yet I think I may; but we upon our side welcome the coöperation of scholars and Bible students on the other side of the Atlantic as represented by Dr. Tigert and many more. I hope that this Ecumenical Conference will not pass away without, in some fashion or another, so bringing us nearer together that in the next decade, by the blessing of God, more good work may be done for biblical scholarship than ever has been done in the past.”

Then follows the address of the Rev. Dr. J. A. Beet, the distinguished commentator, then

professor in the Richmond Theological College of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

DR. BEET'S ADDRESS.

“I wish to express my strong agreement with the admirable paper which we have just had from Dr. Tigert; but I wish to supplement it by a few remarks which I think ought to be made in this Conference. If we call attention to recent corroborations of the scriptural narrative, we are bound to admit that in some cases recent research has, in some small details, contradicted that narrative, and has gone far toward disproving its absolute verbal accuracy. Nay, more. Recent and careful study of the Bible has compelled us to modify a theory of inspiration held by our fathers in the middle decades of the last century. Not that we have changed our doctrines. We hold firmly and unanimously the gospel which Wesley preached, the glad tidings of salvation which kindled the flame of the Methodist Re-

vival. Some one said the other day that Methodists were unanimous in holding fast the teaching of Wesley. He might have gone further and said that wherever to-day, in the Anglo-American race, there is aggressive evangelism, it is inspired by the same teaching. The theology of Wesley is the saving faith of the millions who speak the English language. But some sixty years ago, good men, in their wish to pay honor to the Book of God, propounded a theory of its origin and inspiration, derived not from study of the Bible, but from *a priori* reasoning about it, a theory which went far beyond the evidence. From the untenable position then taken up we have retreated to an impregnable position by careful study of the Bible itself. Such retreat has saved many an army. It is our only safety. We must ask you to have patience with biblical scholarship. It has done much for the spiritual life of the servants of Christ. It has given to us a purer text of the Bible itself

and a more accurate knowledge of the languages in which it was written, and has thus brought us nearer to the still small voice which speaks therein. It has given to us a more intelligible Bible, and the Bible thus interpreted is the only safe theological text-book. But I cannot deny that not a few able biblical scholars reject all the distinctive elements of the gospel of Christ. These men, in spite of many services in the details of biblical scholarship, we must meet with resolute opposition. But in our opposition we must discriminate. If we shut our eyes and strike out right and left we shall strike our friends, mistaking them for foes. For instance, some scholars deny, simply because it conflicts with their theory of the universe, the possibility of a dead man's return to life, and therefore refuse to discuss the abundant and overwhelming evidence that Christ rose from the dead. The dogmatism of rationalists is no reason why we should revile a man because after careful study he does

not think that the last twenty-six chapters of the book of Isaiah come from the same pen as do the earlier chapters. After all, questions of date and authorship must be left to those who have made them their special study. Such questions we cannot settle by appealing either to the tradition of the Church or to our own religious experience."

APPENDIX

PFLEIDERER'S "EARLY CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF CHRIST"¹

I MUST be pardoned for saying flatly that I cannot understand how Professor Pfeiderer could have written such a book as this unless he had first forgotten all the deeper teachings of the New Testament about Christ. The learned occupant of the chair of theology in Berlin University is a mythologist pure and simple. Much learning has certainly made him mad. The reflection that has been running through my mind in reading this little volume is one of satisfaction that its pages will never be perused by the common, blatant

¹"The Early Christian Conception of Christ: Its Significance and Value in the History of Religion." Expanded from a Lecture delivered before the International Theological Congress at Amsterdam, September, 1903. By Otto Pfeiderer, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. London: Williams and Norgate. 1905. 12mo; pp. 170.

infidel of the street. He would find here more dynamite to be exploded under the walls of Christianity than could be supplied by a whole generation of Ingersolls. Professor Pfeleiderer repudiates from his first page to his last the historical foundations of the supernatural and divine elements in Christianity. While declining to assert historical connection between the heathen and the Christian myths, both alike are set aside as the baseless fabric of a dream. Historical Christianity having been ignored by a process of criticism that is as shallow as it is false, the author attempts to give a purely ideal worth to the Christian myths which is of more value than the original historical content. If Professor Pfeleiderer really believes that the historical foundations of Christianity can be utterly subverted, and the religion itself continue an eternal fountain of light and life to blind and perishing men, he is capable of a credulity a thousand-fold greater than that of a believer in the incarna-

tion and the resurrection. In his concluding pages the author tells us that we are to "free ourselves from the fatal ban of historicism," that we are to "let history point the way above history," that "myth and rite were certainly the most suitable forms of expression for primitive Christian belief." Is this David Strauss come to life again? Is it possible that historical scholars will have to repeat the tremendous labor of killing once more this snake that was thought to be dead fifty years ago? Certain it is that Pfleiderer seems to be in the stage that Strauss reached just before his final plunge over the precipice, when he was still crying "All's well." A moment later came the despairing confession, "All is lost." It is a shame that a man entertaining views destructive of the very foundations of Christianity should be occupying the chair of theology in the greatest university of the land of Luther. A mature theologian may read Pfleiderer's book without damage—no doubt such ought

to read it. But it has been many a day since a volume has passed under my eye from which exhaled a more deadly infidelity than from this.

But, after all, it is not a book difficult for the historical student of Christian origins to answer. So far are the central facts and doctrines of Christianity from being capable of a mythical explanation, that the wonder is that so little of that world of demonism and apocalyptic fancy into which Christianity was born, both among the Jews and the heathen, clung to the New Testament record, or even as barnacles to the hull of the great ship of Christianity as it cleft its way through those dark waters. It is safe to say that, whatever may still linger in modern Romanism, there is not a single essential fact, doctrine, or principle of Christianity, as held and taught in the purer forms of Protestantism, that can be shown to be so much as tainted with any element of Jewish or heathen mythology. Similarly, the Epistle to the Hebrews in the early

Church subordinated and abolished that ministry and mediation of angels to which the later Jewish theology attached so much importance. Outside of Romanism, so far as I am aware, there is no survival of that Jewish angelology against which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews aimed his polemic. The Jewish theology may have taught that the Archangel Michael was the guardian and heavenly representative of the nation, and it may be possible to find traces of this idea in that most mysterious of all the New Testament books, the Apocalypse; but for all Protestant Christians Jesus Christ is the only Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and to no other being, angel or saint, do Protestants look for heavenly intercession. It is no doubt true that in the extra-canonical literature of the sub-apostolic age may be found a virtual identification of the Archangel Michael and Jesus Christ, but this is the very literature which the Christian consciousness of that age refused a

place in the canon of the New Testament. We are no doubt beginning to understand in our day better than ever before the steps of the emergence of Christianity from the status of a Jewish sect to that of the early Catholic Church. The extra-canonical and apocalyptic literature, much of which had wide circulation in some Christian circles, is beginning to impress us with the view that much ignorance and superstition, on the part of some of the earliest converts to Christianity, was compatible with the reality of Christian faith and life. One needs to travel only to Mexico and South America on this continent, and to Spain and Italy on the other, among the debased Romish populations, to be satisfied that what was true in the first and second centuries is still true in the nineteenth and twentieth. But, on this account, to attempt to rewrite the history of the Christian origins, as Pfleiderer and Wernle have done, on the hypothesis that these ex-crescent superstitions and mythologies explain

everything, is unhistorical and preposterous. These things were never at home in Christianity and, even if they were, which is, of course, the contention of the mythologists, the fact that the vigorous life of the system threw them off is sufficient proof that something else dwelt in it from the beginning.

The truth is that the novelty of these new apocalyptic studies has very much exaggerated their importance. It is a long road that the theology of the next generation has to travel, but I do not doubt its ultimate triumph even with such traitors as Pfeiderer and Wernle in the camp. The whole Old Testament Messianism has to be studied exhaustively in the historical spirit. A fresh historical conception of revelation and its method has to be worked out and firmly secured. The Messianism of the New Testament has to be studied afresh in the light of these results. Instead of beginning at the periphery, as Pfeiderer now does, all the data at our command must be used for probing the self-con-

sciousness of Jesus to its depths. Then again shall a great light arise in the midst of dense theological darkness to enlighten the nations—even the Germans. Christ will once more prove himself the center and substance of his religion. The Church has nothing to fear while the incomparable records of his life and teachings are read every Sunday from her pulpits. It is no doubt true, that for purposes of theology too abstract a view has been taken of the early history of Christianity. Christianity was far from being the only thing in the world of the first century into which it was born; nor was the New Testament the only professedly Christian literature that circulated widely in the Church before the consolidation of the canon. As has been intimated above, these things are beginning to be better known in our day than ever before. But we are still in the alphabet of these investigations. Professor Charles is very generally esteemed the first authority, for example, as the editor of the texts

of Jewish apocalypses, such as that of Enoch, cited in the Epistle of Jude. Yet we do not travel far among the critics, before we find the suspicion expressed that Charles is all wrong, in some of his fundamental principles of arrangement and interpretation. Certainly it is altogether too early in the day for such iconoclasts and,—though it seem overbold, we venture to add,—sciolists as Pfleiderer and Wernle to begin rewriting the history of Christianity from the assumption that the consciousness of Jesus Christ was submerged in these Jewish speculations, an insignificant fragment of which barely shows above the surface of the New Testament in the obscure Epistle of Jude.

I am not so presumptuous as to put forward these reflections as if they ought to be considered a detailed, historical reply to Pfleiderer. Better scholarship and larger materials than I possess will be needed for this task. But I am thoroughly convinced that I have given no unjust,—nay, no ungenerous,—account of

his position; nor have I exaggerated the plain historical considerations which render his position untenable. It is, indeed, a deep grief that professedly Christian theologians should, in some instances, prove the most dangerous foes of the faith. But, from the beginning, it has been so, and it will probably continue so to the end.

When Pfleiderer exhorts us to "let history point the way above history," he is really demanding that Christianity shall breathe in a vacuum. The truth is that all theological study is now resolving itself into history—none more so than exegesis and dogma. Historical theology has practically the whole field to itself. If Christianity is routed on the field of history, it can never again set its scattered forces in battle array. Yet this is just what Pfleiderer proposes to concede in the outset,—namely, that Christianity has no secure intrenchments on the historical field,—and to make this fatal concession the principle of a

new apologetic which is to win permanent peace and final victory. I repeat with the earnestness of the most solemn conviction that no more deadly foe of the faith has pitched his tent on the field of open and declared infidelity. As relentless war must be declared against such apologists as against the external enemy. Such wholesale denial, on alleged historical grounds, of the very forces which make history is reached not by criticism, but by hypercriticism or, as that name has been repudiated, by pseudo-criticism. An historical science which makes of the progress of humanity a series of mistakes bound up in one huge blunder is as impossible as a scientific explanation of the world which starts with the denial of intelligence and purpose. Both end in the blind alley of atheism.

LOISY'S "THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH."¹

M. LOISY'S contention may be very well represented by a paragraph at the beginning of the third chapter of his section on the Church: "Thus to reproach the Catholic Church for the development of her constitution is to reproach her for having chosen to live, and that, moreover, when her life was indispensable to the preservation of the gospel itself. There is nowhere in her history any gap in continuity, or the absolute creation of a new system: every step is a deduction from the preceding, so that we can proceed from the actual constitution of the Papacy to the Evangelical Society around Jesus, different as they are from one another, without meeting any violent revolution to

¹"The Gospel and the Church." By Alfred Loisy. Translated by Christopher Home. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1904. 12mo; pp. vi, 277.

change the government of the Christian community. At the same time every advance is explained by a necessity of fact accompanied by logical necessities, so that the historian cannot say that the total extent of the movement is outside the gospel. The fact is, it proceeds from it and continues it."

This is the antipodes of Herr Harnack's announcement that "God and the soul, the soul and its God, are the whole contents of the gospel." Both positions are false. Harnack's doctrine is an arbitrary and unhistorical limitation of the teaching of Jesus under the influence of a self-chosen canon of the absolute and relative in the gospel. His own Person and mediation are an essential part of the gospel of Jesus which Harnack seeks thus to exclude. Loisy is right enough in his negative criticism, but wrong in his positive historical construction. We can well understand how a man of scholarship and intelligence, finding himself enmeshed in the actual Roman Church by his

priesthood in it, might sophisticate his mind with some such line of thought as that stated above. There are crises, and even periods, in the history of mediæval Christianity when it has a relative justification. But when one with adequate historical and dogmatic knowledge undertakes the detailed application of the principle asserted to the doctrine, government, and worship of the Roman Church, it breaks down in a thousand particulars. That form of Christianity, in comparison with its purer Protestant embodiments, has the scantiest claim to inclusion in the Catholic Church. It is hopeful to see a Roman theologian alive to such questions as have agitated the mind of M. Loisy and willing to discuss them, but his limitations are painful and his embarrassments evident. It is difficult to believe in the intellectual honesty of a man who could defend the monstrous perversion of the mass in a paragraph like this :

“The development of the Eucharist has been mainly theological and liturgical. At bottom the

belief and the rite have no more changed than have the belief in baptism and its rite. The Supper of the early Christians was a memorial of the Passion and an anticipation of that festival of the Messiah whereat Jesus was present. There is no very marked difference between the Pauline conception of the Eucharist and the idea that simple Christians [in the Roman Church, he means] have of it to-day, those who are strangers to the speculations of theology, who believe that they enter into real communion with God in Christ by taking the consecrated bread [as if the adoration of the host, familiar to every Romanist, could possibly be described in these terms]. The simple blessing and distribution of wine, detached from the love feast, surrounded by readings and prayers and hymns, became the offering of the mass. Since the death of Jesus was conceived as a sacrifice, the act commemorating this death naturally partook of the same character. The liturgical form helped to impart the same thing, by the

real offering of the bread and wine, and the participation of all the faithful in the sanctified food, as in the sacrifices of the ancients. Thence came the idea of a commemorative sacrifice, which simply perpetuated that of the Cross, took nothing from its significance or its merit, and satisfied all the aims included in the common prayer of the Church, interests spiritual and temporal, the salvation of the living and the dead. . . . The evolution of the Eucharist ended in private masses for the priests, and communions of piety for the faithful."

That the mass as practiced in the Roman Church takes nothing from its significance and merit of the sacrifice of the Cross is simply false. When the masses for the repose of the souls of the departed are paid for by the living, it is because they are taught to believe that something more than the already accomplished passion of the Saviour is necessary, and that the priest is competent to repeat on the altar a sacrifice to God which will bring about the

desired release of souls from purgatory. The rest of Loisy's appeal to history in this matter may be accepted as a fair imitation of the truth; but after all it is an account of the evolution of deadly error and falsehood. It came about, no doubt, after some such fashion as he has described; nevertheless, the Eucharist of the Gospels and the Romish mass are separated by the polar diameter. It is a reactionary and spurious "catholicity," false to the principles of the Protestant Reformation, which leads the priestlings and apists of the English Church to smuggle in their poor imitations, under cover of an ambiguous or antiquated rubric, against the express and unmistakable declarations of the Articles of Religion. The wretched taste of it all struck such an æsthetic genius as Matthew Arnold when he witnessed the new-fangled imitation in the English Church; but deeper than all questions of taste is the sacrifice of the truth for which Protestant England and her Protestant Church stand. The battles of the Ref-

ormation may have to be fought again; but it is no breach of Christian charity to fight for the truth—to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

For the rest, the attempt of Loisy to put the worship of Christ and the worship of saints on the same level, as being equally foreign to the gospel and equally the fruit of development, can mislead nobody. In this book we have an example of a bright, strong, cultivated mind, sensitive to the currents of truth that are blowing through the modern world, but hopelessly entangled with an outworn ecclesiasticism, struggling to justify itself in an indefensible position of which it has become at least partially conscious. It has a certain theological value as a criticism of the opposite extreme; but its chief value is as a psychological uncovering of the refuge of lies.

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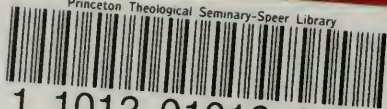
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